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Medical equipment flown into Iraq for first time

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A German plane has arrived with medical equipment bought by Iraq under the U.N. oil-for-food accord, in the first delivery of its kind by air since an embargo was imposed in 1990, a U.N. official said Monday. Eric Falt, spokesman for the coordinator of U.N. humanitarian operations in Iraq, said the plane arrived on Sunday in Habbaniya, 80 kilometres west of the capital. It delivered magnetic image resonance equipment for scanning, ordered from Siemens by the health ministry, that could only be shipped by air, he said. It was flown in under a rare exemptioo to an air embargo. Under the oil-for-food accord, Iraq resumed limited oil exports in December to finance imports of food and medicine for its sanctions-hit people. The sanctions have been in force since its 1990 invasioo of Kuwait.

Russian FM to start Mideast tour in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov will start his eight-day tour of the Middle East in Beirut at the end of the month, Russian Ambassador Oleg Peressypkine said Monday. Mr. Peressypkine said Mr. Primakov will arrive in Beirut on Oct. 24 for a one-day visit during which he will hold talks with President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz. The ambassador said after a meeting with Mr. Bweiz that Mr. Primakov will discuss with Lebanese officials the stalled Middle East peace process and ways to strengthen bilateral relations. He said Mr. Primakov will later visit Syria, Israel, the Gaza Strip, Jordan and Egypt as part of his Oct. 24-31 tour of the region, which President Boris Yeltsin ordered to raise Moscow's profile in the peace process.

Israel releases 9 more prisoners; envoy says release of others 'sensitive issue'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Israel oo Mooday released nine Jordanian prisooers as part of a "deal" reached last mooth in which Israel would free Jordanian and Palestinian prisooers in return for the release of two Israeli Mossad ageots involved in the assassinatioo attempt against a Hamas leader in Jordan, a Jordanian diplomat said.

Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv, Omar Rifai, coofirmed the release of the prisoners hut declined to say whether more Jordanian prisooers are expected to be freed hy Israel.

Asked if five Jordanian prisoners involved in killing Israelis would also be released, the ambassador said that "it is a very sensitive issue and things are not clear so far." He declined to elaborate.

Israel Radio said that eight Palestinian prisoners and one Jordanian were released adding that most of them were accused of "security charges."

The radio, monitored in Amman, said that the prisooers were seot to Jordan oo a Jordanian military helicopter and would be spending the remainder of their sentences in Jordanian jails.

The radio identified those released as: Mustafa Yasser Sweilem, Ziad Mohammad Alami, Bahjat Zahi Noubani, Faris Mohammad Daqah, Abdul Qader Raed Awad, Radi Khaled Soubasi, Mohammad Abdullah Shteiwy, Bilal Mousa Sayed and Mohammad Saloum Salim.

It added that Mr. Salem was the only prisoner who was accused of criminal charges and was seotenced the three years in jail.

Security charges usually include possession of weapons, explosives and membership of hardline

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HAND-IN-HAND: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and former Israeli army general, Oren Shahor, walk holding hands after their meeting Monday. Mr. Shahor, who was a peace negotiator on behalf of Israel and who joined the opposition Labour Party after his retirement from the military, met with Mr. Arafat as part of the ongoing contacts between the Palestinian leader and the Israeli opposition (Reuters photo)

Israeli Mossad chief to apologise to Jordan over latest Mossad fiasco

Combined agency dispatches

THE HEAD of Israel's Mossad secret service wants to apologise in persoo to King Hussein for sending agents to try to assassinate a Hamas leader in Amman, the Haaretz newspaper reported Monday.

A high-ranking government source said Mossad chief Danny Yatom will apologise in writing and possibly in person to the King, although Jordan has informed Israel that Mr. Yatom is oot welcome there, the newspaper reported.

The Kingdom also expected Israel to take firm action against those responsible, but Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said Sunday that he did not intend to sack Mr. Yatom.

However, Israeli newspapers reported that an operational chief in Mossad, known only as "H," will oot be promoted to deputy chief as had been planned.

Mr. Yatom was one of the first witnesses to testify Sunday before a special committee looking into the Misha'al debacle. The board met for 12 hours under tight security. It will also bear from Mr. Netanyahu oo his role.

While Jordanian officials said all Mossad agents in Jordan had been expelled, Haaretz reported that they had only been replaced by a new crew.

It also said security cooperation was continuing, pointing to a visit by Israel's Air Force Commander Eitan Beo Eliyahu to Jordan last week and joint work to hunt down a Jordanian infiltrator into Israel over the weekend.

Meanwhile, the Israeli opposition demanded Mooday that Mr. Netanyahu answer his critics over a botched murder attempt oo Khaled Misha'al, the Hamas politburo chief.

Mr. Netanyahu backed out of plans to speak Tuesday in a special debate in the Knesset, or parliament, oo the failed bid on Mr. Misha'al.

"What do we bave the Knesset for," an angry Shimon Peres, the former Labour prime minister, told Israel Radio. "The prime minister has been attacked and he has to answer."

Labour Deputy Dalia Yitzhik said Mr. Netanyahu had "spat in the faces of Knesset members" by failing to show up for the debate. "Time after time he said he would come to the Knesset and he hasn't. I guess he's afraid."

The prime minister has refused to answer calls to resign hut set up a "clarification committee" to investigate the Sept. 25 attack on Mr. Misha'al. The committee began hearing witnesses on Sunday and Mr. Netanyahu himself is due to testify.

Defending the government before parliament, Michael Eitan, a member of the ruling Likud Party, said the murder attempt was a "malfunctioo" and that Israel will continue to fight terror.

Left-wing members presented Mr. Eitan with a petitioo signed by 2,500 Israelis calling for Mr. Netanyahu to resign.

Regent suggests creation of new NATO culture towards region

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prioce Hassan, the Regent, Monday underlined the importance of analysing the cooteots of dialogue between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and countries of the Mediterranean regioo in a manner that would explore the possibilities of cooperation, comprehensive security and the creatioo of a new culture in NATO's dealing with the region.

Speaking at a meeting at the Royal Court with a NATO delegatioo led by Vernon Penner, NATO's Defence College deputy commander, the Regent called for the need to clarify the picture of Islam as a religioo advocating tolerance and moderation and for the Muslim countries to take part in peacekeeping operations in Europe and other parts of the world.

The Crown Prince emphasised the need to strive to remove misconcepts and stereotypes that link Islam to extremism.

He also emphasised the importance of removing feelings of apprehensioo towards peace amoog certain parties in the regioo which feel that they might lose some privileges in the peace era.

A just and durable peace is bound to secure gains for all parties in the long run, the Regent said.

During the meeting, which was attended by the Deputy Chairman of the Armed Forces Joint Chiefs-of-Staff for operations and the commander of the Royal War College, a general review of the progress achieved between NATO and Jordan was made.

Also reviewed at the meeting were several proposals for increasing the number of joint NATO-Jordanian training courses and promoting the NATO defeoce college's links with Jordanian institutions.

Jordan, Syria to build dam on Yarmouk River

AMMAN (Petra) — The joint Jordanian-Syrian Yarmouk River committee ended two days of meetings here Monday hy agreeing to go ahead with plans to construct Al Wahdeh (unity) Dam oo the river to provide the two countries with irrigation and drinking water.

While reaffirming to the Syrian side that oo dam will be huilt on the Yarmouk without consultation with Damascus, Dureid Mahasneh, the secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), said that the two sides discussed the construction of the Wahdeh Dam, means of protecting the environmeot of the Yarmouk River basin and future projects.

Dr. Mahasneh said the two sides agreed to go ahead with the dam project in accordance with the agreement between the two countries reached in 1997 and that Jordan will update the studies oo the project, taking into consideratioo the rising cost of construction these days and the drop in the level of the river water since 1987. The dam will be huilt on Syrian territory.

He said that the two sides held ideotical views concerning joint water schemes adding that the two sides reviewed all issues and projects in a positive atmosphere.

Dr. Mahasneh said that "Jordan's decisioo to huild the joint dam reflects its oatiooal and pan-Arab commitment which His Majesty King Hussein has been seeking to enhance and promote."

Dr. Mahasoeh said he expected the feasihility studies of the project to be ready before the end of the year.

He noted that the initial estimates for the dam project was put at $400 million hut the Syrians say that

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Iran stages 'show of strength' in Gulf

DUBAI (R) — Iran's naval and air forces staged "a show of strength" in the Gulf Mooday with fighter-hombers and helicopters flying over a parade of 120 ships engaged io military exercises.

Ships of the oavy and Revolutionary Guard oaval units paraded before the command ship Tunh to demonstrate Iran's oaval power and supremacy, Rear-Admiral Ashkbous Danehkar told a reporter of the official news agency IRNA aboard the vessel.

Over the horizon, the U.S. aircraft carrier Nimitz, which passed through the strait of Hormuz into the Gulf Sunday with its hattle group of six warships, conducted normal flight operations, a U.S. Navy spokesman said.

The carrier battle group was ordered to sail to the Gulf ahead of schedule from the south China Sea in response to heightened tension in the region.

Iraq Monday laughed off the U.S. military build up in the Gulf and said it had better things to worry about than "acrobatic movemeots" by the United States.

"This show of force is silly. It arouses laughter...," the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said in an editorial.

The increase in tensioo followed Iranian air raids on two Iraqi bases of the Mujahedeen Khalq, an

(Continued on page 7)

Egyptian Islamists kill 11 policemen

ASSIUT (AP) — Suspected Islamists attacked two police stations in southern Egypt Monday, killing 10 policemen and one civilian, the interior ministry said.

The attacks against police stations in the southern province of Minya were the hloodiest attacks against security forces this year and called into question government claims that they have crushed Islamist groups. Minya is 230 kilometres south of Cairo.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Police in southern Egypt said the shootings were carried out by "terrorists," the word they usually use to describe Islamists.

In the first attack Monday, gunmen hiding in sugar cane fields surrounding the Mellawi police station shot and killed three policemen standing outside the station, police officials in Cairo said. The Islamists escaped.

Half an hour later, Islamists shot and killed eight people standing outside the Abu Qurqas station, the police said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. Abu Qurqas is 35 kilometres north of Mellawi.

The interior ministry confirmed that three policemen were killed in Mellawi and said that seven policemen and one civilian were killed in the second attack. The ministry, however, refused to disclose any details of the attacks.

Police officials in Cairo said the gunmen opened fire from outside the stations, but witnesses and police in Minya said earlier that the Islamists stormed the stations.

It was unclear if the attacks were carried out by the same group of gunmen or if they were part of a coordinated attack, police said.

Minya has been a hotbed of violence between police and militants fighting to overthrow the secular regime of President Hosni Mubarak and establish rule by religious law.

In July, suspected militants killed five police in Minya. A month later, suspected Islamists killed six police in Manfalout, 90 kilometres south of Minya.

Israel abducts Lebanese woman

SIDON (AFP) — The Israeli army abducted Monday a woman from south Lebanon, a day after she appealed for the release of her husband and teenaged son from Israeli detention, the police said.

Zeinab Nasser Tawbeh, 30, was taken by Israeli troops from her house in Arnoun, a village adjacent to the self-declared Israeli security zone in south Lebanon, to an unknown destination, police said.

Ms. Tawbeh had appealed Sunday to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help seek the freedom of her husband and 14-year-old son who were abducted five and 10 days ago respectively by the Israeli army, they said.

Israel often abducts Lebanese civilians, accusing them of links with resistance groups, mainly Hizbollah, which has vowed to continue its armed struggle until Israel pulls out of south Lebanon.

About 200 Lebanese are being detained, mostly without trials or charges and for several years, in Khiam prison in the border area and other prisons inside Israel.

Human rights groups, particularly the London-based Amnesty International, have repeatedly denounced cases of torture and ill treatment of Lebanese detainees in Israeli jails.

Israel also sometimes expels, on such alleged motives, Lebanese families from its self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon which it has occupied since 1985.

Last Wednesday, a Lebanese man, his two wives and seven children were expelled by Israeli troops from the border enclave.

Palestinian snatched from the West Bank

ZAHERIYA (AFP) — Israeli Special Forces snatched a Palestinian from his place of work Monday, presumably on suspicion of a connection to militant groups, witnesses said.

Bassam Al Battat, 30, had just arrived at work in a gas station in the West Bank town of Zaheriya, south of Hebron, when a white minivan full of around a dozen Israeli special forces pulled in, the witnesses said.

The Israeli troops, in plainclothes and toting machineguns, beat Mr. Battat, threw him to the ground and then piled him into the van before speeding off, before the eyes of his co-workers and customers.

Britain defends hunt for Lockerbie bombers

THE HAGUE (R) — Britain faced Libya across the International Court of Justice Monday and defended its hunt for the bombers of a U.S. passeoger aircraft which crashed in Scotland nine years ago.

Pan American World Airways Flight 103, eo route from Loodon to New York, exploded over the village of Lockerbie in December 1988, killing all 259 people on board and 11 on the ground.

Britain and the U.S. blamed Libya for the attack and, backed by the U.N. Security Council, called for the extradition of two suspects from the North African country to face trial in Scotland.

The Security Council imposed sanctions on Libya in April 1992 for its failure to cooperate.

Tripoli maintains that it is entitled under international law to try the men in Libya and has asked for a ruling to that effect from the International Court of Justice.

"This is a scarcely-veiled attempt to preveot the exercise hy the Security Council of its responsibility under the U.N. charter," British Agent Franklin Berman told the court.

Britaio and the U.S. will present a united froot during the eight days of hearings. Both have filed counter-motions rejecting Libya's application and contend that the World Court does not have jurisdiction over the case.

Mr. Berman, legal adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said the matter was now in the hands of the U.N. Security Council. He alleged Libya had a loog history of "encouraging, supporting and participating in international terrorism."

He and the lord advocate for Scotland [Scotland's senior legal officer], Lord Hardie, painted a picture of a painstaking investigation into the bombing that took in 70 countries and finally led to cbarges being filed against two Libyan nationals.

"This was a crime of massive proportions and by far the worst terrorist incideot that ever affected my country," Lord Hardie told the court.

Wreckage from the explosion was scattered some 22,000-square kilometres across Scotland and oorth-eastern England. Around 2,000 personnel were drafted in and finally managed to piece together 80 per cent of the aircraft.

Tests showed the blast had been caused by a plastic explosive in one of the

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Iraq sees good outlook for ties with UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An Iraqi envoy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said Monday that relations were on the mend although they have been cut since the 1991 Gulf war. "Relations between the two countries are going through an important development because of the humanitarian stand of the Emirates towards Iraq," said Saad Abdul Majid Al Faisal, undersecretary at the foreign ministry. He told the newspaper Al Ittihad that "Iraqis will never forget the Arab nationalist positions" adopted hy President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nayahan, who has called for a lifting of the U.N. embargo against Iraq. Mr. Faisal, in the Emirates for an Arab agricultural congress, thanked the UAE for its several shipments of food and medicine to Iraq this year. Relations were brokeo off during the Gulf conflict which evicted Iraq from Kuwait.

Iran denies giving Iraqi planes to anti-Taleban forces

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Monday denied planning to hand over MiG-21 fighter planes belonging to Iraq to Afghan forces fighting the *Taliban Islamist* militia. The denial was made by Qods newspaper, quoting an unnamed Foreign Ministry official. The Arabic newspaper Al Hayat said Wednesday that Iran planned to supply nearly 20 Iraqi jet fighters to the anti-Taleban forces of ousted Afghan Presideot Burhanuddin Rabbani. But Tehran insists it has only 22 Iraqi aircraft wbich could be returned to Baghdad at the U.N.'s request. Tehran is opposed to the Islamist Taliban militia whicb has held Kabul for a year and cootrols around two-thirds of Afghanistan.

FIS calls for total boycott of Algerian elections

BONN (AFP) — The executive of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) called for a total boycott of Algeria's local elections due Oct. 24, io a statemeot released here Mooday. The party said the vote would contribute nothing towards stopping Algeria's violence. Hundreds of civilians have beeo killed in receot weeks in massacres linked to Islamist groups. "Instead of genuine and prompt action towards stopping the hloodletting, the government is foisting elections on Algerians which will serve no purpose," the statement said.

Sheikh Yassin blames intelligence agencies for Algeria massacres

CAIRO (AFP) — Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin has accused international intelligence agencies of responsibility for the massacres in Algeria. "International intelligence agencies are without doubt behind the massacres in Algeria in a bid to destroy that country's infrastructure," Sheikh Yassin said in an interview The massacres were also aimed at "deforming the image of Muslims after the Algerian people chose Islam to solve its problems," Sheikh Yassin said. He was referring to the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) which was poised to win the 1992 Algerian legislation until results were cancelled by the government.

Israel orders homes of three suicide bombers demolished

NABLUS (AP) — Eight Hamas activists wearing white death shrouds and belts with fake explosives strapped to their waists marched Monday in a rally celebrating the release of the group's founder from an Israeli jail.

Participants in the Hamas rally at Al Najah University also burned an Israeli flag, and the head of the student union led the crowd of about 4,000 in salutes to Hamas fugitives involved in plotting previous suicide attacks in Israel.

Palestinian police were not present during the rally, apparently as part of an earlier agreement that President Yasser Arafat's security forces will not enter university campuses.

In recent weeks, scores of Hamas leaders and activists have been arrested by Palestinian police in Nablus. The sweep came after Israel delivered proof that four of five assailants who carried out two suicide bombings in Jerusalem this summer came from Assira, a West Bank village just north of Nablus. One of the assailants was a student at Najah, a Hamas stronghold.

In Monday's rally, eight Hamas activists dressed up as "suicide bombers," with red headbands tied over white hoods to symbolise blood. Another eight, representing Hamas gunmen, wore military fatigues, had their faces masked and swung fake Kalashnikov assault rifles made from wood.

The rally celebrated the release of Hamas founder Ahmad Yassin who was freed Oct. 1 as part of a swap negotiated by Jordan following Israel's botched assassination of a Hamas strategist, Khaled Misha'al, in Amman. Sheikh Yassin, 61, had served eight years of a life sentence.

In a telephone call from his home in the Gaza Strip, Sheikh Yassin urged the students to commit themselves to their studies. He said there was no place for ignorant people and that "only the educated can build the nation."

Sheikh Yassin did not address the issue of violence before the call was cut off. Sheikh Yassin has been ambiguous, saying recently he was willing to end attacks on Israeli civilians on some conditions.

Mr. Misha'al, the Hamas leader who survived the Israeli attack last month, spoke to the students by phone from Jordan.

"(Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin) Netanyahu wanted to give my head to the Zionists as a present," Mr. Misha'al said. "But the arrow shot back at him."

Mr. Misha'al said Hamas was not trying to undermine the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). "We are competing with them in the arena of struggle and we tell them there is no chance for peace with the enemy," Mr. Misha'al said.

Mr. Misha'al also urged Mr. Arafat to release Hamas prisoners.

Meanwhile, Israel decided Monday to demolish the homes of three Hamas activists from Assira — Tawfiq Yassin, Yousuf Showli and Moawiya Jaara — who carried out suicide bombings in Jerusalem on July 30 and Sept. 4. The home of a fourth Assira man, Bashar Salawah, is to be sealed. The orders were delivered at 1 a.m. Monday. The families of the four have two days to appeal the decision to the supreme court. Israel routinely demolishes the homes of suicide bombers as punishment and deterrent.

Palestinian university students supporting the Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigade, Hamas' military wing, hold Korans and fake AK-47 assault rifles as they pose during a rally in the Al Najah University Monday. About 1,000 Palestinian students turned out for the rally which supported the Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigade and showered praise on its founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, recently freed from Israeli prison and returned to the Gaza Strip. Several of the Hamas supporters are dressed as bombers complete with fake explosives strapped around their bodies (Reuters photo)

PLC rejects Abdul Shafi's resignation

RAMALLAH (R) — Palestinian lawmakers unanimously rejected Monday the resignation of legislator Haider Abdul Shafi, a veteran politician and critic of Middle East peace moves.

Witnesses said the 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council (PLA) agreed that its speaker, Ahmad Qoureir, also known as Abu Alaa, would discuss the decision with Dr. Abdul Shafi, 77, who quit this month saying his hopes for the council had been dashed.

Dr. Abdul Shafi headed the list of Palestinian delegates to the Madrid peace conference launching Israel's first peace talks with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians six years ago this month.

A champion of democratic government for Palestinians, he opposed the 1993 peace accord between Israel and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA), saying it did not go far enough in meeting Palestinian aspirations.

In 1964 Dr. Abdul Shafi, a physician, was part of a Gaza delegation to an all-Palestinian conference in east Jerusalem out of which the PNA was born. He accused PNA of not respecting the council and having yet to implement its resolutions.

Haider Abdul Shafi

Israeli bridge players will not take part in Tunisia tourney

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel said on Monday it would not send a team to the world's leading women's bridge competition in Tunisia next week for lack of security.

"In the present circumstances a team representing the state of Israel cannot be in an Arab state without sufficient protection," Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled told Israel Radio.

The radio said the Tunisians would not let the Israelis bring along their own guard from the Shin Bet security service.

Mr. Peled said he suspected the Tunisians were reacting to Israel's botched assassination attempt last month on the life of Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman.

"It could be that there is some sort of hardening [of position]. It could be there is some sort of meaning or complication from the Misha'al affair," he said.

A record field of 18 teams heads for Hammamet, Tunisia, for the start next Monday of the most important bridge contests in the world, the mixed Bermuda bowl and the women-only Venice Cup.

Motti Koenigsberg, head of the Israeli Bridge Association, was quoted by the radio as saying international organisers had sought a compromise.

"They proposed also of course that we appear in the name of the European team and not in the name of the Israeli team and this we refused with all force. We certainly believe the Israeli team is entitled and worthy of appearing in its own name in such a competition," he told the radio.

Tunis had swapped low-level offices with Israel amid burgeoning Middle East peace moves since 1994.

In April, Arab foreign ministers, angry at the building of a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem, urged suspending normalisation with Israel.

In September, Morocco — which has also swapped a low-level office with Israel — decided not to send a four-member team to Israel for a Davis Cup tennis tie, citing "lack of security" after bombers killed 21 Israelis.

Israel's Tennis Association chairman ascribed the Moroccan action to "political considerations."

Greek units join Cyprus wargames amid tension with Turkey

NICOSIA (AFP) — Greek air and naval units joined military exercises by thousands of Greek-Cypriot reservists Monday amid heightened tension over allegations that Turkey violated Cyprus and Greek airspace the day before.

The Cyprus government said it was "making representations" to the United Nations and the International Civil Aviation Organisation for what it denounced as "mass violations" of its airspace by Turkish fighter planes on Sunday.

The official Cyprus News Agency (CNA) said some 60 Turkish jets violated the airspace of Cyprus and Greece in the southeast Aegean Sea, following similar complaints by Athens Sunday.

CNA said two Turkish jets flew over a military airbase under construction at Paphos, on the island's southwest coast, to take reconnaissance photos. "The two warplanes tangled with two Greek air force Corsair fighter bombers as the Greek aircraft made mock bombing runs over the western part of the island as part of the exercise, according to the national guard," CNA said.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkish troops occupied its northern third in response to a coup attempt in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

Some 9,000 members of the Greek-Cypriot national guard are taking part in an annual reservist exercise dubbed "Nikiforos 97" which runs until Tuesday on the southern coast of this eastern Mediterranean island.

The Greek units, which participated in the manoeuvres Monday as previously scheduled, are also taking part in simultaneous annual Greek air-and-naval exercises dubbed "Toxotis" in the Aegean Sea east of Crete and Rhodes. Nicosia and Athens signed a defence pact in 1993.

Greek Defence Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos was due to arrive in Cyprus later Monday to watch part of the Cyprus manoeuvres.

Did Weizman promise more than Israel's premier can deliver?

TEL AVIV (AP) — President Ezer Weizman suggested during a White House dinner that Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu is ready to give up all of the Golan Heights for peace with Syria, a newspaper reported Monday.

[illegible] attributed to Mr. Weizman by the Yediot Ahronot daily were denied by Mr. Weizman's spokesman.

Mr. Weizman last week wrapped up a five-day state visit to the United States during which he met with President Clinton and other senior U.S. officials.

Mr. Weizman's role is largely ceremonial, but he has become increasingly involved in efforts to rescue the Mideast peace process, much to the chagrin of Mr. Netanyahu. Against the prime minister's wishes, Mr. Weizman has been pressing for a greater U.S. involvement in the negotiations.

During a White House dinner last week, Mr. Weizman discussed with Mr. Clinton the prospects for a resumption of peace talks with Syria.

Mr. Weizman told Mr. Clinton, according to Yediot: "I am willing to eat this entire bottle and guarantee that Bibi is willing to reach an agreement with Syria on everything, and for the price of everything." Bibi is Mr. Netanyahu's widely used nickname.

Syria has demanded that Israel withdraw from all of the Golan Heights captured in the 1967 Mideast war. Mr. Netanyahu has said he was ready for some territorial concessions, but would never agree to a complete withdrawal.

Mr. Weizman's spokesman, Arieh Shumer, said the two presidents discussed the Israeli-Syrian peace talks, "but they didn't discuss territory or bottles."

Sudanese junta denies fall of town to southern rebels

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's military junta has denied a claim that rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) captured a strategic garrison town, Belinia, in South Kordofan province, the press said Monday.

Army spokesman Mohammad Al Sanousi Ahmad said that SPLA rebels had simply carried out "looting operations on a post far away" from the provincial capital, Kadugli, in a reference to Belinia, which he did not name as such.

"Kadugli town is quite secure and safe," General Ahmad added, according to the daily Akhbar Al Youm, adding that the rebels had fled after their attack and dismissing SPLA claims of a threat to Kadugli itself.

The SPLA claimed on Friday to have captured Belinia, some 600 kilometres from Khartoum, the previous weekend.

Gen. Ahmad said that isolated attacks by the rebels, who have fought Khartoum regimes since 1983, were meant to "delude public opinion about the strength of the SPLA" ahead of planned peace talks to be held on Oct. 28.

Riek Machar, a breakaway leader from Colonel John Garang's SPLA, who has signed a pact with the junta and become head of a South Sudan Coordinating Council, meanwhile stated that he expected the mainstream rebel movement to carry out military manoeuvres ahead of the talks due to take place in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

Mr. Machar claimed that the situation in the mainly animist and Christian south of the country was "quiet and under control," while his troops and other former rebels who have concluded a peace accord with General Omar Bashir's junta, backed by Islamists, were "prepared to defend the country".

According to the independent daily Al Rai Al Akher, Mr. Machar said that Col. Garang was unable to carry out a threat to occupy the main city in southern Sudan, Juba, a key goal of the SPLA since 1988, before it began to split into rival factions.

"Garang alone cannot achieve this goal of taking Juba," Mr. Machar said. He head the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM), which joined several other rebel splinter groups in signing the peace agreement with Khartoum last April.

The Nairobi talks are due chaired by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, under the aegis of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has been seeking to end a conflict which has cost, directly or indirectly through famine and disease, an estimated million lives.

The SPLA and Gen. Bashir's junta, which ousted an elected civilian government in 1989, agreed late last month to meet for IGAD-brokered talks for the first time since negotiations broke off in 1994.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 ....Sandokan
14:30....C.R.O.
15:00 ....Skippy
16:00 ....The Album Show
16:30 ....Square One T.V.
17:00 ....French Programmes
19:00 ....News in French
19:30 ....News Headlines
19:35 ....Sarah
20:00 ....Coach
20:30....Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 ....News in English
22:30 ....Great Defender
23:15 .... I Remember Nelson
23:59....End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:17....Fajr
05:34 ....(Sunrise) Duha
11:22....Dhuhr
14:37 ....'Asr
17:10....Maghreb
18:27....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swelfieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Hot and dusty weather conditions will prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. There will a chance of thunder showers and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, thunder showers are also expected, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Amman 20/34
Aqaba 23/36
Deserts 18/36
Jordan Valley 22/37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 34, Aqaba 34 Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tusluq 357253
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy ....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan 995743
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ...637111
Civil Defence Dept 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ..199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance).... 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority.... 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity....644281/6
Akileh Maternity....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir....775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ....(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ....(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ....(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ....(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:05 .... Sanaa (RJ)
07:05....Damascus (RJ)
07:45 ....Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:25 ....Beirut (RJ)
09:40 ....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
09:45....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:50 ....Aqaba (add) (RJ)
16:15 ....Cairo (RJ)
16:30....London (RJ)
16:40 ....Frankfurt (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights
08:00 ....Cairo (MS)
09:30 ....Al 'Arish (PF)
12:00 .... Riyadh (SV)
13:30 ....Dubai (EK)
15:40 .... Istnabul (TK)
16:45....Doha (GF)
17:05 ....Kiev (6U)
20:30 .... Tel Aviv (LY)
21:50 ....Aden (IY)
22:35 ....Larnaca (CY)
22:45 ....Amsterdam (KL)
23:55 ....Bucharest (RO)
00:25 ....Jakarta (GA)
02:00 ....Rome (AZ)
03:25 ....London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:45 ....Aqaba (RW)
09:05 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 ....Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45 .... Beirut (RJ)
08:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
08:30 ....Aqaba (add) (RJ)
11:15 ....Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:25 ....Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 ....Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:10 .... Paris (RJ)
12:15 ....Cairo (RJ)
13:05 ....London (RJ)
13:05 .... Madrid (RJ)
20:25 ....Jeddah (RJ)
20:40 ....Damascus (RJ)
21:00 ....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
03:30 .... Riyadh (SV)
09:00 ....Cairo (MS)
10:30 ....Al 'Arish (PF)
16:40 ....Istanbul (TK)
18:00....Doha (RJ)
18:05 ....Kiev (6U)
19:15 ....Dubai (EK)
21:50 ....Tel Aviv (LY)
22:50 ....Aden (IY)
00:55 .... Bucharest (RO)
01:25 ....London (GA)
01:30 ....Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ....Athens (OA)
03:00 ....Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 ....Aqaba (RW)
09:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 ....Aqaba (RW)

At least ten candidacies rejected for failure to meet requirements

AMMAN (J.T.) — At least ten of the 561 candidacies for the Nov. 4 polls have been rejected so far for falling short of the requirements stipulated hy the elections law, sources at various administrative governors' offices in the Kingdom said yesterday.

The rejected candidates reportedly suhmitted incomplete or incoherent applications or did not meet in some other way the conditions contained in Articles 18 and 20 of the 1986 Elections Law.

However, no official reason has yet been given for these rejections, as the law stipulates that the governors have three days from the submission of candidates' applications to issue and display in puhlic places the final lists of both rejected and approveu candidacies. Candidates started submitting their applications Friday, and registration period lasted for three days, until Sunday.

Article 18 lists the conditions for membership in the 80-seat Lower House as follows: Jordanian nationality, registration in the final electoral lists, and 30 years of age.

The same article also states that would-be candidates cannot have been sentenced to "a prison term exceeding one year for a non-political crime from whicb they have not been pardoned."

Candidates are also ineligible if they "have been convicted of a moral felony or misdemeanor."

Candidacies are also rejected if the would-be candidate belongs to an unlawful organisation, if he/sbe has "any material interests in any of the government's departments," or if be/she "is a relative of the King to a degree specified by special legislation."

Furthermore, Article 20 forbids employees of ministries, government departments, or puhlic official organisations from running in the elections.

The candidates wbose registrations were rejected can, according to the law, appeal before the Court of First Instance.

Two candidacies were reportedly rejected in Amman's First District: Jamal Ahu Yahia and Nayel Wada'an Da'jeh. The total number of candidates in that district therefore could go down from 22 to 20.

The application of one candidate, Ahmad Shami, was rejected hy the administrative governor of Amman's Third District. Should Mr. Shami withdraw from the race, the total number of candidates in that district would be 18.

Three candidacies could be invalidated in Amman's Fifth District: those of Dahoud Daradkeh, Jamal Ensour, and Sa'oud Zubeidi.

The number of contestants in Amman's Fifth District could go down to 36.

In the Central Bedouin District, the administartive governor invalidated the candidacy of Deifallah Ziben. The number of candidates in this district could go down to 19.

Two candidacies were rejected in Zarqa: Issam Suleiman and Wafiq Naddaq. The total number of candidates in this densely populated district could become 39.

One candidacy was rejected in Salt, but the candidates' name was not revealed.

The law grants any voter the right to appeal any candidacies before the Higher Court of Justice.

Majali announces plan for law redividing electoral districts

IRBID (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali announced Monday that his government plans to submit a new and modern draft election law to the next Parliament proposing the division of the Kingdom into electoral districts equal to the number of deputies in the Lower House of Parliament.

Addressing a meeting of the Executive Council in Irbid Governorate, Dr. Majali said the new election law would require each citizen to acquire a voter card showing his or her electoral district and the national code number.

Dr. Majali requested that governors and other concerned officials in the election process invite candidates running in the Nov. 4 elections to visit the operations rooms created hy the Ministry of Interior in order to inspect the preparations and arrangements for the upcoming elections.

The candidates will be briefed on the wbole mechanism of the elections so they can be assured about the soundness of the procedures, which will guarantee fair and free elections, he said.

"We are approaching a very important stage of democratic life and it is incumbent on all citizens to exert efforts toward projecting the best image of Jordan. We have to cooperate to arrive at the best results in the course of building the nation and promoting the cause of democracy," the prime minister said.

"Freedom and participation" is not a mere theoretical slogan but rather a practice for all in various fields in schools and institutions, Dr. Majali said.

He said the government is planning to decentralise public administration before the end of this year, adding that decentralisation encourages investments not only in Amman, but rather in the various governorates where adequate facilities are available.

At the meeting, Irbid Governor Qaftan Majali outlined arrangements for the upcoming elections in his governorate.

Germany to provide JD2.4 million in development project assistance

AMMAN (Petra) — Germany is to provide Jordan with technical assistance worth nearly DM6 million (JD2.3 million) to finance development projects, according to four memoranda signed in Amman Monday.

Under the first memorandum, DM3 million (JD1.2 million) will be provided to help protect the archaeological and historical site of Petra. The Germans will supply equipment and train local specialists to protect the hills from erosion.

The second memorandum provides for DM825,000 (JD333,303) to finance German studies on a number of Jordanian projects that Germany plans to finance. The experts will determine the dimensions of these projects and prepare for their implementation.

The third memorandum stipulates that Germany will provide technical assistance worth DM1.5 million (JD600,000) to the Ministry of Agriculture. The assistance will be in the form of experts to help Jordan develop the agricultural sector and to provide equipment and train Jordanian cadres.

The fourth memorandum entails the provision of technical assistance worth DM500,000 (JD200,000) for the training of hospital technicians. Under this memorandum, the Germans will provide experts to train Jordanians on the maintenance of hospital equipment and to provide technological data related to hospitals.

The four memoranda were signed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf-Hunaidi and German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende.

German Ambassador Peter Mende and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf-Huneidi Monday sign memoranda providing over JD2 million worth of technical assistance for development projects (Petra photo)

Court hears expert testimony clarifying error in murder trial

By Rana Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The criminal court presiding over the trial of Mazen Masri, a 34-year-old father accused of poisoning his two children with cyanide, heard two police department criminal lab experts who clarified an error in the method of measuring the deadly poison.

The witnesses, Major Hassan Bani Mleih and First Lieutenant Ali Abu Ruman, told the court that they used the millimetre per blood litre measurement unit to detect the cyanide percentage found in the children's blood, instead of using the decimetre measurement unit.

Last month, Colonel Matrouk Habahbeh of the criminal lab told the court that the actual percentage of cyanide detected in the children's blood was 60 milligrammes per litre, and not the 600 milligrammes per litre as a prosecution witness had testified earlier.

The two children, Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, were found unconscious hy their mother in the Abu Oneizah Housing Complex in Shmeisani on Sept. 11, 1996.

Two weeks later, Mr. Masri reportedly confessed to poisoning his two children hy giving them two cyanide pills before leaving for work.

In January, Mr. Masri retracted his previous confessions, stating that he was forced to confess under psychological pressures exerted on him hy the investigators.

The tribunal set Oct. 19 as the new date to hear the last court witness, Head of the National Institute for Forensic Medicine Pathologist Mo'men Hadidi.

Defence Attorney Ahmad Najdawi told the Jordan Times Monday that after hearing Dr. Hadidi's testimony next week, he is planning to ask the court to summon an expert to testify for his client.

Also Monday, the court heard four witnesses in the case of three men, including a prominent Jordanian singer, charged with rape and statutory rape of a minor in April of this year.

Two of the three men, identified as T.N. and U.J., the singer, are charged with statutory rape, while the third defendant J.A., is accused of rape.

However, in July, the minor changed her testimony on T.N., and said he had no sexual relations with her, prompting the court to order her immediate arrest on perjury charges.

The defence team rested their case Monday, opening the way for the prosecution to present its closing argument.

At the same time, Criminal Prosecutor Saleh Lawzi informed the court that he is still awaiting the results of investigations from the Amman criminal prosecutor concerning the perjury charges against the minor.

The court, headed by Judge Mohammad Ajarmeh and including Judges Mifleh Moubeidin and Issa Hamdan, postponed the case until Oct. 29 to hear more witnesses.

Majali calls for Arab pharmacy faculties to promote education

RAMTHA (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday opened a three-day conference for the association of pharmacy faculties in the Arab World hy calling on the concerned institutions to promote pbarmacy education to enable the Arah Nation to confront challenges facing the profession in the 21st century.

Underlining the importance of the pharmaceutical industry, Dr. Majali told delegates from 12 Arah states gathered at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) that the industry assumes a basic and significant place in the Arab World, adding that the entry of Arab countries into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) requires them to sbow more cooperation at the level of scientific research related to the manufacture of medicines.

Dr. Majali referred to world economic blocs, saying these undoubtedly bave an impact on the pharmaceutical industries of Arah countries.

He stressed the need for pharmacy faculties in the Arab World to launch closer cooperation and to move ahead from the stage of imitation to creativity.

Mu'tazz Salem, JUST dean of the faculty of medicine, told the 30 delegates that the Arab pharmaceutical industries now stand at the threshold of a new era, requiring them to improve their products to compete in foreign markets.

He warned that once the WTO rules have been applied, the Arab pharmaceutical industries must abide hy the regulations and respect intellectual property rights.

Dr. Majali earlier met the JUST president and dean of the faculty of pharmacy and urged them to help bridge the gap between students and teachers and officials through regular meetings, in which students can offer suggestions.

The delegates, representing Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Kuwait, Palestine, and Jordan, are reviewing 150 research papers on drug manufacturing, bospital pbarmacies, pharmacy education, and other relevant topics.

Lectures in Aqaba examine Kingdom's underwater heritage

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The city of Aqaba last week hosted a series of lectures that drew attention to marine life and its environment, the problems affecting it, and the means of protecting this important part of the Kingdom's heritage. Rana Naber, Media Committee spokesperson at the Friends of the Environment Society (FOE) said.

The lecture, entitled "The Underwater Heritage of Jordan," was attended by the mayor of Aqaba and several officials, in addition to members of FOE and the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Society (JREDS). Ms. Naber stated.

The presentation included a lecture by Nidal Oran, JREDS project manger in Aqaba, in which transparencies and slides illustrating the species of marine life that live in the Gulf of Aqaba were shown, she added.

In his lecture, Mr. Oran said the Gulf of Aqaba has the perfect underwater environment for a large number of different kinds of marine life.

"The Gulf of Aqaba possesses unique characteristics, which are mainly due to the stability of the region's temperature, the clear waters, lack of rain, and the dearth of tributary streams," Mr. Oran explained in his lecture.

"As the gulf is semi-closed, the salinity of the waters reaches up to 40 grammes per litre," he added.

There are around 1,000 species of fish, and over 250 kinds of coral reefs, he illustrated.

The joint effort between FOE and JREDS was organised to stress the importance of protecting the marine life in Aqaba, since the area is now attracting more tourists and development projects that could threaten the gulf's coral reefs, Ms. Naber explained.

A discussion took place afterwards on the importance of implementing environmental impact assessment studies before approving any project in the area, she said.

Sucb lectures are important for raising awareness of the environment and its protection, Ms. Naber concluded.

JREDS is a non-governmental organisation that is concerned with the preservation and conservation of Jordan's underwater beritage.

The society was established in August 1995, and conducts activities including lectures, diving trips, and events with an ecological flavour.

Surgeons' conference examines new surgical techniques, research

AMMAN (Petra) — Surgeons from France, the U.K., and five Arab countries including Jordan Monday began a three-day conference, organised by the Jordan Society of Surgeons and the Jordanian-German Surgeons Society, to discuss a wide range of medical topics with the focus on internal surgery, neurosurgery, and plastic surgery.

Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi addressed the opening session and highlighted the surgical advances made by Jordanian surgeons, which have won Jordan a good reputation.

Jordanian medical services in general, and surgery in particular, have been attracting patients from various Arab countries, the minister said.

He thanked the Jordan Society of Surgeons for organising the conference to enable the exchange of surgical techniques among the participants.

Basem Dajani, president of the Jordan Medical Association (JMA), outlined the association's activities since its establishment in the early 1950s, noting that JMA now serves as an umbrella for 30 medical societies covering different specialisations.

JMA will continue to support the medical societies and help them arrange conferences, workshops, and seminars to further promote the medical profession, Dr. Dajani said.

Jordanian participants in the conference represent the private and public sectors, as well as the Royal Medical Services of the Jordan Armed Forces, universities, and the Ministry of Health.

The conference aims at orienting specialists on the latest developments in surgical operations, disseminating results of scientific research pertaining to surgery, and enabling the Arab and foreign surgeons to exchange expertise and ideas on modern trends in surgery, according to JMA.

An exhibition of medical equipment and drugs used in surgery was also opened on the sidelines of the conference.

Japanese team to conduct study for hospital improvement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has decided to conduct a basic design study on the "Project for Improvement of Medical Equipment for the University of Jordan," and bas entrusted the study to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), according to a JICA press release Monday.

A study team scheduled to stay in the country until Oct. 30 has had a series of discussions with relevant officials and has conducted site surveys, the statement read.

In the course of discussions, the two sides have confirmed that the government of Jordan requested a CT-scanner, defibrillator, doppler, ECG, electronic microscope, ultrasound machine, ventilator, and an X-ray machine, the statement continued.

They also agreed that JICA will prepare a draft of the basic design and dispatch a mission to Jordan in order to explain its contents in January 1998, according to the statement.

Mr. Matsumoto, leader of the mission, stated that "the purpose of the project is to improve the quality and capacity of medical services at the University of Jordan Hospital and its function as a medical training and research centre," the statement continued.

"The project will further strengthen cooperation between Japan and Jordan in the field of health sector," he added.

The minutes of meeting were signed Monday between Mr. Matsumoto and President of the University of Jordan Hospital Mahmoud Abu Khalaf.

German embassy opens children's nursery near Karak

By Mohammad Khawaldeh
Special to the Jordan Times

KARAK — Commercial Attaché at the German embassy in Jordan Stefanie Oppenkowski Monday inaugurated a children's nursery at Smakieh, near Karak in southern Jordan, which was built and furnished with German government funds.

In remarks at the opening ceremony, Mrs. Oppenkowski said the nursery, which cost JD6,500, is one in a series of similar projects financed by Germany in various regions of the country.

The German embassy spends nearly JD40,000 annually on facilitating the establishment of six to nine social projects targeting women, according to Mrs. Oppenkowski, who added that work is currently underway for the opening of nurseries in Zarqa, Zay, and Ashrafieh District in Amman with funding from the German government.

The German embassy is willing to participate in similar projects in conjunction with local institutions that lack funds, she said.

She stated that she was pleased with the cooperation of the Smakieh townspeople who contributed to the success of the project.

Also addressing the inauguration ceremony was Mohammad Thuneibat, a representative of the social development office in the town of Qasr near Karak, who noted that the opening coincided with the Kingdom's observance of Child Day.

The Ministry of Social Development is ready to cooperate with various organisations in implementing projects benefiting the local community, he said.

According to German embassy sources, the project in Smakieh was carried out in cooperation with the Humboldt Club, a Jordanian society of graduates from Germany whose education was financed through the Germany-based Humboldt Foundation.

Marwan Mousa, the club's president, said the society this year secured two scholarships from the fund for Jordanians specialising in mechanical engineering and computer science.

He said the society is now developing plans for further academic scholarships, adding that arrangements are being made, in cooperation with the Humboldt Club and other German institutions, for opening special courses in Jordanian universities focusing on German-Arab studies. Dr. Mousa said he expected such plans to be finalised during the coming year.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "The French Lieutenant's Woman" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL

* Belgian film "Totos le Heros" and German film "Fitzcarraldo" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., respectively.

PLAY

* Children's play "Shahrour and Traffic Rules" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 10:00 a.m. (daily until Oct. 16).

EXHIBITIONS

* Photo exhibition on the impact of sanctions imposed on Iraq, at Hamourabi Art Gallery, until Oct. 14

* Works by Iraqi artist Ali Al-Ebadi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 23 (Tel. 5537598).

* "The Project of the Essence: Aspects of the Italian Paintings in the 90's" at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, until Oct. 22.

* Exhibition of paintings and weaving entitled "Murmurs of Our Land" by Riham Ghassib and Bani Hamida at Bani Hamida House (Tel. 658696/7), until Oct. 30.

* Exhibition of Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aura Mediterrània" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).

* Quilt exhibition "Piecing It Together" by Ms. Virginia Harris at the American Centre, Abdoun, until Oct. 20.

Indonesian forest fires said spreading

JAKARTA (R) — Forest fires raging in Indonesia, which have been blamed for a health-threatening smog covering much of South East Asia, are spreading in some areas, government officials said Monday.

An official at the government's Disaster Coordinating Bureau said he had reports of worsening fires on Sumatra Island, while fresh hotspots had appeared in remote eastern areas.

"We've learned that forest fires worsened in Lampung on Sumatra Island. We also receive reports of fresh hotspots appearing in south Sulawesi and Irian Jaya," the official said.

The reports came as officials at the bureau briefed Monday a U.S. team on the extent of the crisis. Three U.S. C-130 military transport planes are expected to be deployed to help Indonesia's fire-fighting efforts.

"Two U.S. military officials were here this morning and we gave them the information needed on the extent of the forest fires," another official at the bureau said.

The United States is the latest country to try and help Indonesia fight the fires, which have burned hundreds of thousands of hectares of scrub, bush and forest, and set ablaze huge amounts of peat.

Fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, on the Indonesian side of the vast Borneo Island, have produced a choking smog triggering health alarms across the region.

Neil Byron, of the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) at Bandung, told Reuters the biggest problems remained extensive fires in above-ground growth in the Jambi and Riau areas of Sumatra and peat fires in central Kalimantan.

Fire-fighters, including more than 1,000 Malaysians who have joined Indonesian troops, forestry workers and volunteers, have had some success against smaller and more localised fires, experts said.

"But the bigger fires are much more difficult," one said.

The fires have been blamed on forestry and plantation companies and small farmers clearing land for development, aggravated by severe drought caused in part by the El Niño weather phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean altering global weather patterns.

"It's still difficult to get the necessary up-to-date information on the extent of the fires," CIFOR's Mr. Byron said.

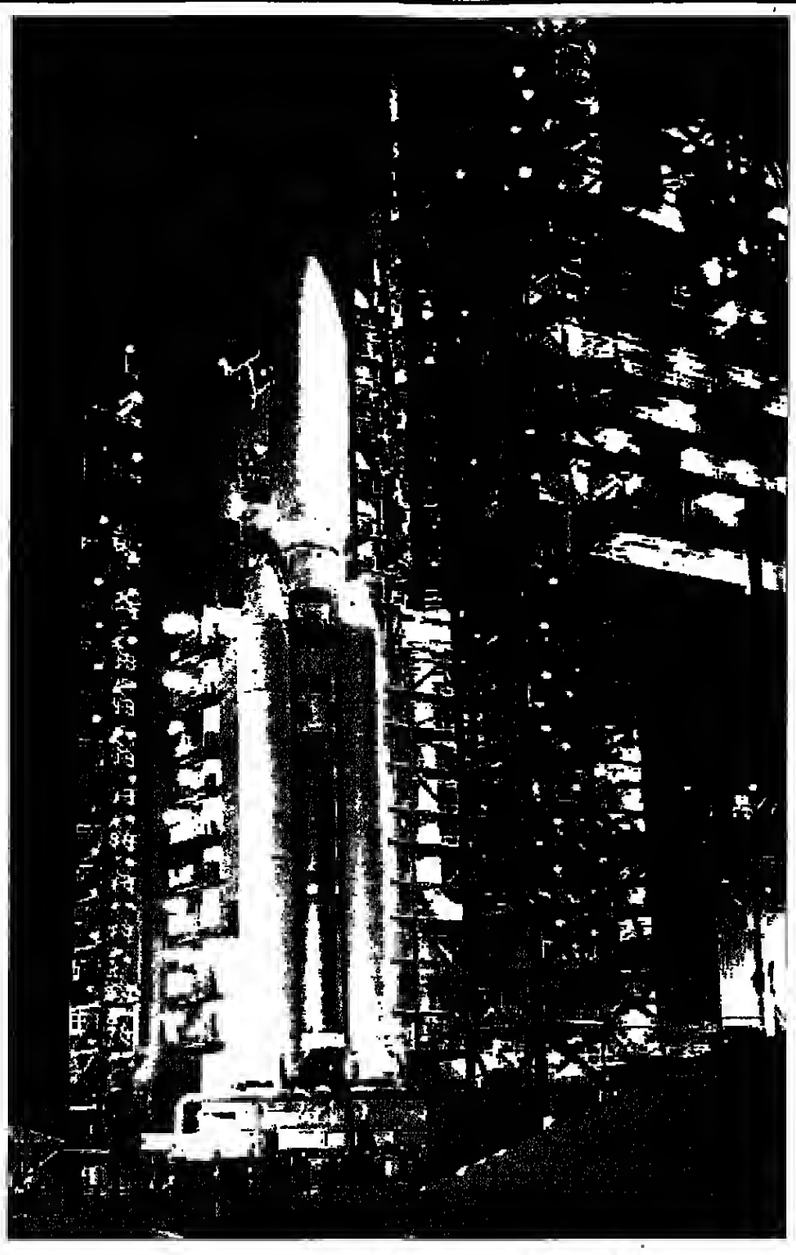
Scattered rain has fallen in some parts of the archipelago, but experts say the full monsoon downpour is needed to help extinguish the fires, especially in the deep-lying peat.

Two of the U.S. C-130s will carry aerial fire-fighting equipment capable of holding 11,300 litres of water that can be released from the air. It was not immediately known where they would operate.

State Department spokesman James Rubin has said the aid programme would support efforts by Indonesia and Malaysia in five areas — humanitarian relief, fighting the fires, monitoring air quality, analysing the health effects of the haze and weather forecasting.

Malaysia said Monday it would soon send a new batch of 1,200 firemen to Indonesia to replace the contingent sent last month.

Two Australian water-bombers have been in action since last week. A number of other nations have also offered assistance and equipment.



The service structure from the Titan 4B launch vehicle at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station is rolled back in preparation for the launch of the U.S.-made Cassini probe and its European counterpart Huygens (AFP photo)

Crew prepare space walk to start Mir repairs

MOSCOW (AFP) — The crew aboard the Russian space station Mir were to check their spacesuits Monday as they prepared for a series of space walks designed to repair damage to the ageing orbital craft, officials said.

Vera Medvedkova, spokeswoman for the Russian space agency, said the sortie — probably to be carried out by Mir's two Russian cosmonauts — will aim to boost power supplies to the space station.

Mir Commander Anatoly Solovyov and Pavel Vinogradov are to reroute the control system which orientates the solar panels of the damaged Spektr science module via Mir's other science module Kristal, she said.

That would enable the 11-year-old space station to draw more power from the sun and allow Mir's U.S. astronaut David Wolf to carry out the full programme of scientific experiments.

Russian space officials have scheduled the space walk for next Monday.

Further walks will be necessary to complete running repairs to Spektr, damaged during a near-fatal collision in June between Mir and an incoming cargo craft.

The supply ship rammed Spektr, puncturing the science module in at least one place, forcing the then crew to scramble to seal it off to avoid a catastrophic depressurisation of the entire space station.

In later space walks, the crew will attempt to place a protective cap on the damaged zones of Spektr in a bid to permanently seal the holes and allow the module to be repressurised and brought back into service.

Queen Elizabeth's visit to India starts amid row

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II's state visit to India began here Monday with pomp and ceremony amid hurried official denials that Britain had been branded a "third-rate power" by the Indian prime minister.

The British monarch's six-day trip, coinciding with India's 50th year of independence but dogged by controversy here, began with a ceremonial welcome by Indian President K.R. Narayanan at the presidential palace.

In the background, officials launched a damage control exercise after banner headlines in the press Monday reported that Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral had bitterly criticised India's former colonial rulers.

Foreign Ministry officials claimed that Mr. Gujral's reported attack on Britain for meddling in India's 50-year dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir was "without foundation."

Several newspapers reported that Mr. Gujral, who attended the Queen's ceremonial welcome, made the criticism at a private meeting last week in Egypt, calling Britain "third rate power."

He was quoted as saying it "has no business to play in this (Kashmir) issue in any form, since in any case it was responsible for the partition of the country."

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, who flew in Sunday with the queen after a visit to neighbouring Pakistan, welcomed Monday's denial.

"I welcome the assurance by the Indian government," he said. "The long and close ties between our two countries are based on mutual respect between two independent and equal states."

Mr. Cook denied earlier reports from Islamabad that he had discussed British mediation over Kashmir, a divided Himalayan state which has caused two wars between India and Pakistan and which continues to plague their relations.

The queen, wearing a pink floral silk dress and matching hat, inspected a guard of honour and was given a 21-gun salute Monday before later visiting Rajghat, a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi whose campaign of non-violence led to the end of British rule in India.

She laid a wreath and wrote in a visitors' book: "Mahatma Gandhi strove throughout his life for tolerance and mutual understanding and respect ... His example should remain an inspiration to us all now and in the future."

The queen then returned to the British-built presidential palace, where she and Prince Philip were received by the Indian president.

Later, she opened an exhibition of world treasures, on loan from Britain, at New Delhi's National Museum.

Around 20 men shouting anti-British slogans tried to stop her motorcade but were intercepted by police.

The British monarch said that India "with its rich and varied culture, has been one of the foremost contributors to civilisation through the ages."

She added the exhibition was a mark of "how India and Britain should, and do, work together."

British High Commission sources, meanwhile said the queen was making last-minute changes to a speech she was due to give at a banquet Monday evening.

A speech made to the Pakistan parliament last week, where she backed Indian and Pakistani efforts to forge closer ties, was interpreted as "interference" in some quarters here.

Monday's controversy follows weeks of problems surrounding the queen's visit to Amritsar Tuesday, where 379 civilians attending a public meeting were massacred in 1919 by British colonial troops.

The queen is due to lay a wreath at the Jallianwala Bagh memorial in what British officials have termed a "special gesture" of reconciliation.

Relatives of the victims, however, backed by some local politicians, have pledged to stage street protests, arguing only a full public apology would satisfy them.

The queen will later visit the southern cities of Madras and Cochin, while Prince Philip will visit Ahmedabad, Bombay and Hyderabad before their departure on Oct. 18.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth shares a laugh with Indian President K.R. Narayanan (right) as Prince Philip looks on during a welcome ceremony in the forecourt of the presidential palace in New Delhi (Reuter photo)

Saturn launch delayed by one hour

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA. (R) — The launch of NASA's $3.4 billion nuclear-powered Cassini mission to Saturn was delayed by one hour Monday when launch pad preparations fell behind schedule.

The launch of the U.S. Air Force Titan 4B rocket carrying the Saturn-bound probe was rescheduled for 5:55 a.m. EDT (0955 GMT), NASA launch commentator George Diller said.

The launch was delayed because problems retracting a launch pad gantry had held up fuelling operations.

The Air Force had until 7:15 a.m. (1115 GMT) to get the rocket off the ground before having to delay the launch by a day.

The towering 56-metre Titan, was to place the 5,670 kilogramme Cassini probe on its roundabout route to the ringed planet, swinging by Venus twice, Earth and Jupiter before reaching its goal in July 2004.

The probe's plutonium-power source generated calls from anti-nuclear protesters to scrap the mission, but NASA and the Department of Energy, which fabricated the batteries, said there was no risk to the public should Cassini's rocket explode on launch.

Project officials put the chance of the plutonium canisters cracking open in a launch explosion at 1 in 1,400, with any release of plutonium occurring on impact with the ground, close to the launch pad.

Forecasters were predicting a 40 per cent chance that brisk easterly winds and the possibility of rain showers would prevent the rocket's predawn launch.

The probe has until Nov. 15 to embark on its 3.54 billion kilometres voyage to Saturn. A launch after then would expend more of its valuable manoeuvering fuel, extend its journey by up to two years and reduce its science gathering capability once it arrived at Saturn.

Cassini is to spend four years touring Saturn's system of rings and moons and will drop a European-built probe onto the surface of its largest moon, Titan.

2nd batch of Cambodian refugees return from Thailand

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand (AFP) — The second batch of the 46,000 Cambodian refugees who have fled fictional fighting in the north of the country were repatriated from Thailand Monday, Thai military here said.

Some 233 Cambodians refugees left the emergency camp they have sheltered in for the past two months in Kap Choeng district of Thailand's eastern Surin province early Monday in five buses, with seven trucks for their belongings.

At noon (0500 GMT) they crossed back into Cambodia at a border crossing point here, about 160 kilometres southwest of Kap Choeng, escorted by officials from Thailand-Cambodian Border Coordination Committee and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

The refugees were to be driven to Sisophon in Cambodia's northwestern Banteay Meanchey province, where they would stay two nights for registration, before being sent back to their homes, Thai military said.

They fled to Thailand in August during fighting between Cambodian government forces of second Prime Minister Hun Sen and troops loyal to ousted first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh at the royalist base of O Smach.

A relief official said the 233 refugees, from 81 different families, all lived in Banteay Meanchey province, and that another repatriation movement was tentatively scheduled for Thursday.

A first batch of 245 refugees returned to Cambodia Friday.

Some 2,000 of the refugees in Kap Choeng camp, which holds more than 20,000, have volunteered to go back to Cambodia, while another 25,000 are staying in Thailand's eastern province of Trat.

The "selective repatriations" are only being made to locations designated by the UNHCR as safe, as fighting rumbles on between royalist and government forces, the relief official said.

Australian fires destroy area size of England

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — Massive bush fires which have razed at least 1.5 million hectares of grazing land in Western Australia sparked a row Monday with some farmers accusing Aborigines of lighting them deliberately.

Firefighters were battling to halt the raging blazes, covering an area the size of England, according to experts. Monday firefighters were burning a 180 kilometre stretch of land to create a fire-break.

The Bushfires Board of Western Australia (BBWA) said 50 or so fires had been burning for two weeks in the remote, dusty red Pilbara and Kimberly regions, which contain some of the hottest and most inaccessible land on earth.

The raging fires are topping temperatures of around 40 degrees Centigrade, officials said.

Bushfires occur annually here but landowners have described these as the worst in living memory, destroying twice as much land as the Indonesian forest fires which have been burning for several weeks.

They have also exacerbated racial tensions between farmers and Aborigines.

Farmers suspect some of the fires have been deliberately lit by the area's indigenous inhabitants.

Most farmers in the area give Aboriginal groups free access to traditional lands under leasehold, on the condition they "behave appropriately."

Years ago one of the Aborigines hunting methods was to light fires and catch the animals as they fled the flames and Pastoralists and Graziers Association President Barry Court said it was possible that was happening again.

"The racial tension is the worst it's ever been, and these fires are not helping," Mr. Court said.

But a Kimberley Land Council spokeswoman said the council "seriously doubted" the fires had been deliberately lit.

"It's this kind of broad general accusation that leads to increased racial tension. If they've got any proof, they should name names," she said.

"I don't believe that relations are bad, but I do believe that some pastoralists have felt uncomfortable with the notion of Aboriginal people's traditional ownership." Other fires were believed started by lightening strikes, which are common in Western Australia at this time of the year but are usually extinguished by rain.

About 23 emergency services volunteers, pastoralists and volunteer firefighters were Monday to burn 50 kilometres of land to form a firebreak east of Broome, in the northwest of the state, BBWA spokesman Gary Bishop said.

They hope the break, which they have been bulldozing for a week, will contain blazes burning on four cattle stations in the Kimberley region.

"We hope the firebreak will contain the majority of the fires into the desert," Mr. Bishop said.

However, there were few fears that the smoke could add to the cloud of pollution from the Indonesian forest fires, which have shrouded much of South East Asia in a choking smog.

"There's not as much haze from spinifex as there is from the forest fires in Indonesia," a BBWA spokesman said.

"There has been talk of it contributing to the problem in South East Asia but it's very hard to say. The winds are constantly changing although if the current south easterlies continue it would be heading that way."

The rugged landscape has prevented firefighters from tackling many of the blazes.

Truth commission resumes probe of South Africa's Winnie

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Monday resumed its questioning of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela about her alleged complicity in unsolved crimes dating back to the late 1980s.

Ms. Madikizela-Mandela, who resorted to her maiden name after president Nelson Mandela divorced her last year, arrived for the hearing through a side door to avoid waiting reporters.

Accompanied by lawyers, she declined to make any statement or to answer any questions.

She was subpoenaed in August to answer questions about her alleged involvement in murders, abductions and torture committed while her husband was in jail for fighting apartheid.

Ms. Madikizela-Mandela has most often been linked to the fate of teenage activist Stompei Seipei, who was found with his throat cut just days after he was abducted to her Soweto home and beaten.

She was convicted of the kidnapping and assault of Sepei and other children and heavily fined after a prison sentence was reduced on appeal.

The TRC is empowered to question anyone in its effort to document the human rights record of the war over apartheid, and can grant amnesty to offenders who confess their crimes.

The commission, which was set up to heal the wounds of apartheid, does not, however, have the power to prosecute or to recommend prosecution.

The closed inquiry in Ms. Madikizela-Mandela's activities began on her 63rd birthday on Sept. 26, but was adjourned after only a half-day of questioning.

The commission, headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, has said it is probing accusations made against her by 45 witnesses. But Monday's inquiry was expected to only last the day, and nothing she would say to the panel will be revealed in public.

At her own insistence, Ms. Madikizela-Mandela will discuss the allegations in an open session of the statutory TRC scheduled for Nov. 24.

The embattled former first lady has consistently pledged her innocence and ignored the final Sept. 30 deadline to apply for amnesty for politically motivated human rights offences.

Ms. Madikizela-Mandela has survived a rollercoaster public life which plummeted last year when her husband divorced her, criticising her for being a spendthrift who cuckolded him with a young black lawyer.

But this did not harm her image as a champion of the impoverished masses or cut into her grass-roots support base. Last month, the 60,000-member ANC Women's League nominated her for the ruling party's second highest post.

Opinion is divided as to whether she will win the party deputy presidency, with several other challengers expected to be nominated at the congress in December. Another front-runner is thought to be current party Chairman, Jacob Zuma.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, heir-apparent to President Mandela when he retires in 1999, recently sought to play down — but did not refute — speculation that if she won the party vote, she would become the country's next deputy president.

The Truth Commission is probing human rights abuses on both sides of the apartheid divide. It has the power to subpoena witnesses and grant amnesty to perpetrators who confess fully to their crimes.

Tornado flattens Muslim camp in Bangladesh, 22 die

DHAKA (R) — A tornado levelled a huge camp of Muslim devotees near the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka killing at least 22 people, officials said Monday.

They said the death count could go up as many of the 500 or so injured were in critical condition and more bodies would be dug up as the clearing of rubbles continued.

Witnesses said a powerful whirlwind sucked up all the makeshift tin-roofed temporary camps in a one-square-km area Sunday night.

"The whole area that the tornado swooped on has been razed to the ground," one witness said.

"It appears some people are still missing and their fate remains unknown," said Ahmad Hossain at Tongi, a small industrial town 20 kilometres north of Dhaka.

Officials earlier said hundreds of people injured by the tornado desperately needed medical aid Monday.

They said authorities rushed medicine and surgical tools to hospitals at the town of Tongi after doctors said they had run out of supplies.

"We worked through the night and mobilised whatever we could. We are trying to help... to the best of our ability," one doctor told reporters Monday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock over the loss of lives and injuries, and ordered "relentless medical and relief efforts" to help the victims," Bangladesh Radio said Monday.

Officials and police Sunday night said 20 people had been killed and over 500 injured.

The official BSS news agency confirmed 15 deaths. Newspapers Monday gave the death toll up to 25.

"The toll may rise further... but by the grace of almighty Allah, the number of fatalities was much lower than was initially feared," an official at Tongi said.

The tornado lasted just a few minutes, sweeping through a market and makeshift sheds housing the Muslim devotees — attending a 10-day Islamic ritual — on the bank of the River Turag.

Relatives took the bodies of the dead to their homes after the tornado subsided, but doctors said more than 200 people had been admitted to Tongi hospital with injuries.

"Some 200 others have been rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Many have been sent to clinics and private hospitals," Doctor Ayubur Rahman of Tongi Hospital said.

Doctors at Dhaka Medical College said they treated nearly 150 injured.

Rescue operations continued early Monday, supervised by local legislator Ahsanullah Master. Police said most of the debris had already been cleared by police, fire brigade personnel and volunteers before daybreak.

Witnesses Sunday said there were nearly 100,000 people from across the country were in Tongi for the ritual, which began on Oct. 3.

"We were caught unaware... and could not imagine what was happening," he said.

Nearly 80 people were killed and thousands left homeless when a cyclone from the Bay of Bengal swept large areas on the Bangladesh coast last month.

A fire brigade steward helped by volunteers carry an injured man to hospital after a tornado swept Tongi town near Bangladesh capital Dhaka killing at least 20 people and leaving over 500 injured (Reuter photo)

Landmark Basque trial opens

MADRID (AFP) — The landmark trial of 23 Spanish Basque separatist political leaders accused of collaborating with the ETA guerrilla group opened Monday amid tight security and criticism about its fairness.

The trial at the Supreme Court involves 23 leaders of the Herri Batasuna Party, ETA's political wing. All face charges of "collaboration with an armed group."

Hundreds of police and security forces were stationed around the building to guard against possible attacks by members of the ETA, which has been fighting for three decades for a separate homeland for the Basque provinces.

Herri Batasuna is the third largest party in the autonomous Basque country, with 12 per cent of the vote. It has condemned the trial as a political ploy to undermine Basque nationalism.

The 23 leaders are facing charges relating to the screening of an ETA video during election campaign meetings last year. The party is also accused of justifying two ETA murders in press statements.

Prosecutors have called for eight years imprisonment for each of the party leaders.

Sunday, several thousand supporters of the party marched through the centre of Bilbao waving the Basque flag and chanting "Independence", "No to the trial", and "Here they imprison like under the dictatorship."

The marchers were joined by families of the defendants and jailed ETA members who carried a banner calling for "democracy for the Basque country."

Floren Aoiz, Herri Batasuna Party spokesman, gave a speech to the Bilbao rally in which he insisted that "Herri Batasuna is not ETA."

32 injured in Japan train crash

TOKYO (AFP) — A "super express" train carrying 550 people collided with an empty passenger train in central Japan leaving 32 people injured, two seriously, police said Monday.

The smash occurred Sunday evening within the confines of the main station at Otsuki in Yamanashi prefecture, 80 kilometres west of Tokyo.

One carriage from the Azusa 13 super-express overturned and four others were derailed 180 meters west of the station, said East Japan Railway Co. officials.

Train services remained suspended Monday morning as police launched an investigation.

The two seriously injured were named as Atsushi Zenke, 24, driver of the out-of-service train, and Sayaka Uehara, 21, a female passenger. Four of the injured were taken to hospital.

The Azusa 13, which links Tokyo and Matsumoto in Nagano prefecture, appeared to have been travelling between 90 kilometres and 100 kilometres per hour, officials said.

Rescuers helped passengers out of the train through windows of the overturned carriage, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) television showed.

No details of the likely cause were given straight away. But Kyodo News reported that railway officials suspected the driver of the empty train may have overlooked a signal as he left Otsuki station.

Other possible causes included a malfunctioning stop sign and a fault in the Automatic Train stop System (ATS) in the empty passenger train, Kyodo said.

"Along with a possible human error by the driver, we have to suspect a malfunction of the ATS," an East Japan Railway official said.

"Since the crews of the train were detained by the police when the accident occurred, we have no way of knowing what exactly happened," the official said.

A worker looks at the wreckage of the trains which collided near the Otsuki station (AFP photo)

Columbus' legacy sparks protests across the Americas

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Protesters across the Americas marked the 505th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World by holding rallies against government social policies and smashing statues of the explorer.

Rallies were held in several cities in the United States and in Mexico, as well as Honduras. In Ecuador thousands of Andean and jungle Indians gathered for a massive protest Monday that will include a "capture" of the capital city.

In the United States there were large Columbus Day protest marches in New York, Los Angeles and Austin, Texas.

Topping the list of grievances are what many in the Hispanic community see as unfair immigration laws that are selectively enforced.

"I've been working here (in the United States) for years," said a woman at the New York protest who only gave the first name of Lucia. "My children were born here and I pay high taxes. (The government has) no right to throw us out."

The New York rally was organised by a group called "500 Years of Resistance," and included natives from North and South America.

In Tegucigalpa a crowd gathered at the downtown Colon Plaza — the Spanish name for Columbus — to smash a statue of the explorer.

Rally organiser Salvador Zuniga said the protest was called because Columbus "started one of the biggest holocausts in history."

He said the Genoa-born navigator was responsible for "the death of 70 million indigenous people and the most disgraceful plundering of the indigenous peoples."

In Mexico, thousands marched in Columbus Day protest rallies in Mexico City and in two cities in the southern state of Chiapas.

In Chiapas some 5,000 Mayan natives marched through the city of San Cristobal demanding land and the fulfilment of the government peace promises with the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN).

An equal number marched through the town of Ocosingo, also in Chiapas, with similar demands.

Unlike previous years, no EZLN members or leaders participated.

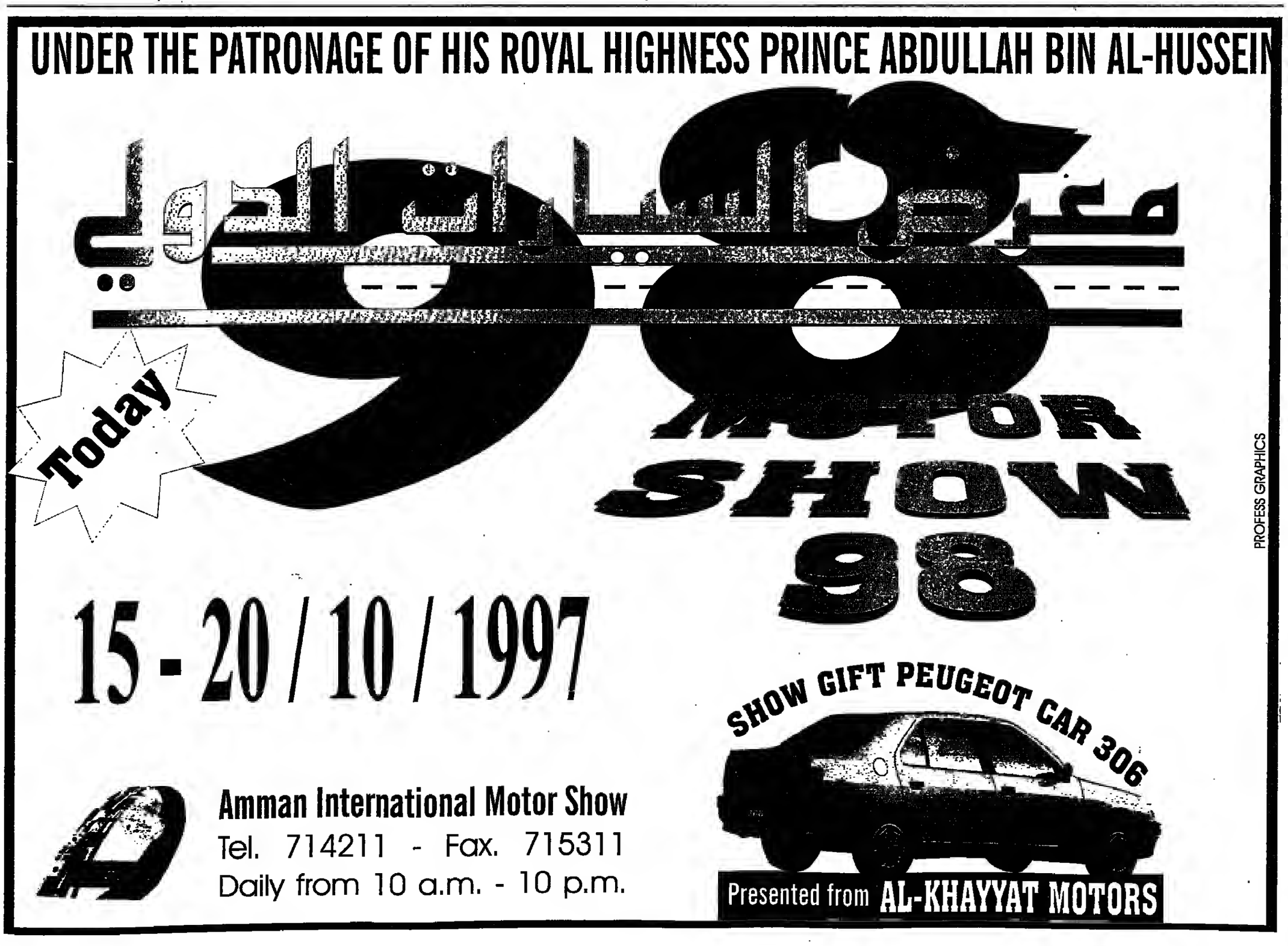
Protesters also demanded the withdrawal of the army from the indigenous communities throughout the region, where they have been stationed since the outbreak of the Zapatista uprising in January 1994.

In Ecuador, some 30,000 natives gathered on the outskirts of Quito for a peaceful "capture" of the city Monday.

The Indians planned to set up a makeshift congress that will hand the government proposals to reform the constitution.

The protesters were to be supported by unionised industrial workers, oil workers from the jungle oil wells and activist civil society groups.

The Indians and workers have been moving towards Quito from Andean communities and jungle villages since late September. They have been fed and aided by supporters along the way.



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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 684311, 699634
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 696183

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Campaign '97 — a start

WITH THE start of the election season, campaigning for the 13th Parliament is picking up momentum. The first week of the official campaign has seen the entry into the race of 561 candidates who are competing for the 80 seats of the lower chamber compared to 559 in the 1993 elections. This suggests that the country has not responded to the call by some of the opposition parties to boycott altogether the Nov. 4 polls. The fact that 26 candidates who belong to the boycotting political parties have "chosen" to run is an indication that the battle against participation in the elections may have already been lost.

What would be a more significant reading, though, is the number of voters who have not only registered but also collected their ballot cards. Out of 1,980,000 who have registered this time, only 648,000 have actually received their necessary documents that would enable them to cast their votes on election day. Of course it is too early to read into this number since we are still three weeks away from election day.

What is indeed a major disappointment is the low number of women candidates. Only 17 have met the deadline Sunday to register themselves. Given women's drive to increase their participation in the democratic process and enhance their political role, it is puzzling that less than 20 women have chosen to take part this time. It is now up to those 17 candidates to convince the largest number of women to cast their ballots, and hopefully elect them, next month.

The result of a poll conducted by one of the Arabic dailies and published Monday, which showed that 72 per cent of voters will cast their ballots, is a very encouraging finding. But no matter which way people go in choosing their next representatives to Parliament, only large turnout can prove Jordanians belief and trust in democracy and parliamentary life.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan said the results of a recent Gallop poll, published in the Israeli daily Maariv newspaper, showed that most of the Israelis surveyed said they would reelect Netanyahu despite his bungled affair against Hamas. The result of the opinion poll can only reaffirm the evil and extremist nature of the Israeli society and can only underline the fact that extremism and terrorism has become an integral part of the intrinsic nature of the Jewish state, said the writer. Hassan said that by rewarding Netanyahu for his criminal act the Israelis are thus declaring their disregard to all commitments and peace treaties and their determination to pursue the policy of state terrorism and tampering with the stability and security of the region. To further underline this stand Netanyahu openly and determinedly announced at a press conference last week that Israel will fight what he called terrorists anywhere and with all means available, Hassan added. According to the writer, this means Netanyahu is determined to commit other crimes in other places.

Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan said, as no political parties are nominating candidates for the coming elections, Jordanians should expect a 13th Parliament of 80 deputies representing 80 tribes or clans in the Kingdom. Adwan said these deputies do not represent all clans in Jordan or the whole of Jordanian society. With the one-person, one-vote system and with the absence of political parties only clan representatives are expected to make it to Parliament said the writer. He added that clan deputies will seek government attention towards their own issues and not the interests of society as a whole, including issues related to cities and major urban regions. The writer said democracy can not be promoted by restricting Parliament to the benefit of the tribes and the clans rather than the whole Jordanian society.

View from the Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Hamas, Netanyahu, Jordan and Arafat: Credentials, directions in a land of prophets and politicians

THE FOILED Israeli assassination attempt in Amman on the life of Hamas Political Bureau Director Khaled Misha'al earlier this month has generated much new speculation on the relationships among four principal regional actors: Hamas and its freed spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin; His Majesty King Hussein and Jordan; Benyamin Netanyahu and his right-wing Israeli government coalition; and, Yasser Arafat and the Palestine National Authority (PNA).

My impression is that Hamas and Netanyahu have affirmed their status as mirror images of one another, while Jordan/King Hussein and the PNA/Arafat emerge with their established political credentials and directions heightened in degree, but fundamentally unchanged in substance. Jordan has again verified the three fundamental principles that define its overall policies: a) it will expand domestic political space for Hamas and, in its perception, other ideologically extreme groups in order to maintain the greater imperative of domestic tranquility and peace; b) it will always play a constructive, dynamic diplomatic role among Palestinians, Israelis and others in the region, whenever an opportunity arises; and, c) it will give absolute top priority in its actions to promoting a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace and to normalising relations with Israel, even in the face of substantial domestic opposition — because regional peace-making, linked to foreign aid and leading to foreign investments, is seen in Amman as the number one existential prerequisite for Jordan's long-term security and well-being.

These three principles now appear anchored in Jordanian political cement, and the signs of opposition to them within the country are episodic and limited, rather than powerful or persistent.

Yasser Arafat and the PNA continue to slide into ever lower circles of credibility, ravaged by deep structural weaknesses and disequilibrium and in every single one of their key relationships. With the Palestinian people and Hamas, the PNA remains hostage to its mediocre domestic governance performance, its corruption-tainted management record, and its inability to generate further tangible gains from the Oslo process (thus leading to embarrassments like the very respected Dr. Haider Abdul Shafi's recent resignation from the PNA legislative council); with Israel, the PNA appears to be a chronic junior partner and subservient quasi-vassal whose basic validity stems not from assuring Palestinian rights but rather from assuring the security of the Israeli state and its colonial settlements in occupied Palestinian lands; with Jordan, Egypt, Syria and the rest of the Arab World, the PNA appears to be engaged in perpetual petty feuding and rivalries that erode its pan-Arab support, and leave it dangerously isolated and weak at key diplomatic junctures; with the United States, the West, and the rest of the world (and as a direct consequence of the above structural weaknesses), the PNA appears more and more as only a partial interlocutor in the Palestine issue, and even then one that is politically fragile and chronically economically dependent on international welfare. The PNA and Arafat have suffered immense domestic and pan-Arab political damage from their resumption of full security cooperation and negotiations with the Israeli government while Israeli construction work at Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa continues apace and the Jewish presence in the Ras el-Amud area of Arab East Jerusalem is fully institutionalised.

The most fascinating relationship in this complex web is that between Hamas and the Netanyahu government.

I had the opportunity last week to spend some time with Khaled Misha'al and his Hamas colleagues at one of their Amman offices, where I interviewed Misha'al and spoke at length with some of his colleagues. I left with the distinct impression that Khaled Misha'al and Benjamin Netanyahu, though very different in their positions, are mirror images of one another in their emotions and endeavours.

They both represent an identical phenomenon played out in different national contexts: a fearless, violent projection of power, sanctity and sacrifice, tapping the fears of an entire people traumatised by the existential reality and threat of holocaust, denial, degradation, or extinction. The many parallels between Misha'al and Netanyahu as political beings are matched by the political dimensions of Hamas and Likud. The individuals and the ideologies are both: a) explicit in their total rejection of the legitimacy or right of the other to share sovereignty in Palestine/Israel; b) fully capable of using indiscriminate political and military violence to achieve their aims, c) perpetually wrapping their political ideology in the cloaks of religious spirituality and morality, highly evocative nationalistic memories and constructions, and the precise dictates of international law and conventions; d) chronically vulnerable to erratic swings in support among their publics, and to being used as vehicles for protest votes in times of mass discontent; e) culturally, ideologically and structurally limited in their basic appeal to a minority domestic constituency that is socio-economically and politically marginalised; f) offering a very attractive combination package of a comprehensive, principled, uplifting ideology in unison with militant, daring and sustained action against the enemy; g) constantly accepting the dangers, sacrifices and martyrdom that are inherent in such struggles for justice and national security; and, h) firm in their conviction that the only language the other side understands is the language of power and violence.

No wonder, then, that both groups view one another as inherently vulgar, amoral, violent, politically predatory, diplomatically inflexible, and the spearhead of some global threat not just to kill the other's people but also to wipe out their entire civilisation. This is not a political battle. *This is an existential, tribal, primordial fight-to-the-finish* between gladiators who feel they must either kill the enemy or be killed by the enemy — for in this small neighbourhood, in this serious business of combined mythological-ideological-theological nationalism, there is room for only one player, one game, one tribe, and one interpretation of God's desires and favoured people. And these are not only politicians leading the battle to protect and to save their people; these are people whose missions and actions propel them partly into the realm of the prophetic, alongside the political — familiar, ancient and crowded terrain in this part of the world. They talk tough because they feel invincible. They act decisively because they believe they can achieve the impossible. They succeed as leaders because they believe their faith can help them to achieve miracles.

Since these two forces are so intense, dynamic, opposed, and intermittently popular and powerful, one of them will have to leave the scene or both will have to reconcile themselves to moderating their demands and negotiating and coexisting with the other. The idea that they can strike a political deal in the current circumstances is fanciful nonsense; for in the realm of the prophetic the thought of political compromise is suicidal. It is precisely because Hamas' appeal is on the rise in the short term that Arafat and Netanyahu put away their personal pride and their amateurish politics and agreed to resume the Oslo peace process. Their tragic dilemma is that the more they pursue the Oslo process according to the harsh new Netanyahuesquian rules, the more that Arafat loses credibility, and the greater becomes Hamas' appeal as a protest vote — which then makes Hamas and others like it a more compelling political partner for other Arab states whose own people feel the same indignities and emotional suffering as the Palestinians.

Israel's nuclear power: collapse of another wall of secrecy

By Elias M. Zananiri

THE WALL of secrecy Israel has clamped over its nuclear reactor in the desert town of Dimona in the south is appearing to crumble. A court decision in Tel Aviv holds the Israeli government responsible for the death of an employee working at the reactor plant. The worker died of cancer, which was believed to have been caused by nuclear radiation.

For the first time in Israel's history, a public debate on security precautions taken at the country's nuclear reactor in Dimona, has ended with a Tel Aviv court ordering the government of Israel to pay compensation to the family of the deceased employee. The court ruled that the Dimona reactor is operating with its "eyes closed," showing contempt for human life and not taking necessary safety precautions against radioactive materials.

The verdict, taken late last week, referred to the death of Haim Eitach, a worker at the nuclear plant who died of cancer in 1989 at the age of 43. He had been working at the reactor plant since 1963.

Israel has usually kept a thick veil of secrecy around the activities of its nuclear reactor plant, which was presented to the outside world as a textile factory when it was established in the mid-50s.

In its verdict, the court took notice of the extraordinary difficulties that the Eitach family lawyer had to go through in order to obtain documents and data he needed to support his clients' claim that Haim Eitach developed cancer and died because of nuclear radiation from the Dimona plant. His research was made all the more difficult because of the classified nature of the work at the nuclear reactor.

During the trial it was established that in the course of his work at the plant, the Eitach was exposed to three episodes of radioactive exposure — incidents in which radiation leaked outside of the reactor bubble. Two years after the third episode, in 1980, he was diagnosed as having cancer. Three years after his death, his widow, Miriam Eitach, initiated the suit, together with her three children.

The court deliberations lasted for five years.

The court affirmed the plaintiff's claim that there is a high probability that Haim Eitach developed cancer after being exposed to radiation in an incident caused by managerial negligence. The state will therefore pay $750,000 to Eitach's family. The court's verdict attacks the testimony made by the prosecution's prime witness, Dr. Haim Lichtner, calling it "unreliable." Dr. Lichtner, a top official at the Dimona plant, is responsible for safety procedures there. The verdict stated: "The impression has been garnered that Dr. Lichtner has not spared any effort in presenting a rose-coloured picture of the safety procedures against radiation exposure undertaken to protect reactor workers."

The verdict also ruled that in the course of his testimony, Lichtner made an effort to confuse facts related to the exposure accident in 1980. The judge ruled that reactor managers ignore, as a consistent policy, the risk of radiation building up in the bodies of workers from exposure at places outside of the plant — from dental X-rays, CT scans; this neglect has arisen despite the fact that the level of any worker's exposure to radiation can be easily monitored. "The reactor's approach causes worry and outrage," the judge ruled.

During the course of the trial, the reactor's representatives could not prove that significant safety precautions were taken in Eitach's case; they did not prove that he wore a device to measure radiation levels. It was also not established that Eitach was briefed personally about work procedures and cautionary measures to be taken to avoid exposure to dangerous levels of radiation. Moreover, the reactor's management did not establish during the trial how the plant follows-up on radiation levels to which workers have been exposed, and how it responds to a situation where a worker has been exposed to dangerous levels.

The judge criticised the claim that a verdict against the reactor in Dimona would be likely to harm all workers in the nuclear field in Israel. Dozens of lawsuits are still pending: Suits filed by workers in nuclear reactors who developed cancer are stuck in the Israeli judicial system. This is because they are having difficulties getting official figures on what was being done in reactors (in Dimona and Nabal Soreq near Tel Aviv) and this affects their chances of getting a meaningful medical opinion.

Haim Eitach's case is the first case of a cancer patient who worked in a reactor in which it has been ruled that the cancer was a result of exposure to radiation in the workplace.

Following the Tel Aviv court, a legal precedent has been established and it would certainly help other employees in their legal claims.

In all the suits still pending before Israeli courts, the plaintiffs have insisted that the reactor's management did not protect its workers against radiation damage.

These claims are fully rejected by the Atomic Energy Commission, which is responsible for Israel's nuclear reactors.

In addition to the Atomic Energy Commission's opposition to all external investigation of the nuclear reactors, from a security standpoint, the commission has taken care to distribute conclusions from studies that it has carried out itself. One of the studies, whose results were published three years ago, even went as far as to determine that not only do workers in Dimona not develop more cancer than the rest of the population, quite the opposite — they develop less cancer than the rest of the population.

The cancer-suffering reactor employees claim in contrast that the reactor management is concealing information about the level of security against radiation at the facility. Until today the Atomic Energy Commission has only announced one accident at the Dimona reactor, during which one worker died.

The commission's official announcement determined that the worker's death was unconnected to the radiation incident or to radiation pollution, it was caused by "a bump on the head." The accident occurred in 1968, but was only exposed three years ago.

For the past four decades, Israel has denied it ever had a nuclear reactor in Dimona and claimed it would not be the first country in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons to the region.

But foreign experts believe Israel's nuclear arsenal amounts to some 200 nuclear bombs.

During the Gulf war, Israel reportedly prepared long-range ground-to-ground Jericho missiles with nuclear warheads and was ready to launch them against Iraq. It was Israel's former prime minsiter, Shimon Peres who last year broke the secrecy on Israel's nuclear capabilities when he offered an Israeli cancellation of all nuclear projects in return for full peace with the Arab World. "Give me peace and I give away our nuclear capability," said Mr. Peres before a meeting with editors of Israeli newspapers.

Mr. Peres is considered the godfather of Israel's nuclear programme because in the 1950s, as director general of the Ministry Defence, he cut a deal with France for the creation of the nuclear reactor in Dimona.

The writer, who worked for WTN and MBC televisions, is currently a correspondent for the Gulf Today and the Jerusalem Times. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Them's the rules

To the Editor:

I WRITE with reference to the letter to the editor entitled: "Killing the Dead Sea" (Jordan Times, Oct. 8, 1997).

First of all I would like to agree with Laura Srouji Khoury that Jordanian visitors to the Dead Sea would benefit from having a larger choice of facilities that cater for all budgets. However, I would like to address Ms. Srouji's harsh attack against the Dead Sea Spa Hotel, which is identified in her letter only as "the private hotel at the beach."

To start with, the entrance fee to the hotel is JD 7.5 per person, or JD 15 which includes a buffet lunch. I do not know from where Ms. Sronji came up with the figure JD 10. This fee covers, in addition to the usual expenses, the cost of imported soft sand, which needs to be replenished regularly, greenery, salt-less soil, cleaning, clean towels, and, not least, freshwater which has to be brought to the Dead Sea in tanks. Given all these costs, Ms. Srouji may agree that the entrance fee is by no means unreasonable.

Second, Ms. Srouji comments that no one should be obliged to eat the hotel food. This is correct. No one is obliged even to enter into the hotel. Life is all about choices. However, those who chose to avail themselves of our facilities are expected to observe the rules of the hotel. I do not know a single hotel that allows guests to bring their own food and beverages, and I do not believe that the Dead Sea Spa Hotel should be expected to make an exception. It is as embarrassing for us as for our clients to have to subject them to a search before they enter the hotel, but some families try to bring along pots and pans full of all sorts of food, along with their own refreshments, and even hard liquor. Should they be allowed to consume these meals on the premises, the hotel would not only be responsible for cleaning up after them, but also for any attacks that they may suffer, such as food poisoning, which may result from the food being kept in uncooled containers in the heat of the Dead Sea. Besides, the Dead Sea Spa Hotel offers a variety of menus and refreshments at reasonable prices. A glass of beer, for instance, costs only one dinar, which I believe to be competitive with any establishment of the same standard in Amman.

However, it was most unfair to describe the hotel food as inedible. We have guests who stay for four weeks at a time, which they would not if the food were as bad as all that. Most of our foods are imported from Europe and they comply with European catering standards, which I believe are adequate.

Finally, I regret that Ms. Srouji and her family had a disappointing time of their Friday outing, and I reiterate the validity of her complaint about the absence of intermediate-level facilities at the Dead Sea, but I also believe strongly that criticism should be fair and that it should only be directed where it is due.

Ramzi Nazzal
Dead Sea Spa Hotel
Jordan

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Israel releases 9 more prisoners; envoy says release of others 'sensitive issue'

(Continued from page 1)

organisations.

"The release of these prisoners followed the deal reached with Jordan after the assassination attempt of the Hamas politburo chief [Khaled Misha'al]," the radio quoted an Israeli security source as saying.

The source, who was not named, said that the nine detainees freed on Monday "were neither members of Hamas nor were they involved in attacks against Israeli targets or their bands were stained with blood."

The radio said that the deal between Jordan and Israel calls for releasing 30 Jordanians.

The Israeli Radio figures contradict those made by Jordanian officials who said that the deal called for the release of only 23 prisoners from Israeli jails.

The radio quoted Israel's Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who was involved in concluding the deal with Jordan, as saying that his country's relations with Jordan will improve in the near future, following the strain in relations because of the assassination attempt.

"Jordan-Israel relationship is built on mutual interests and the needs of the two sides," the radio quoted Mr. Mordechai as saying following a meeting of the Knesset foreign and security committee.

"Security arrangement between Israeli and Jordanian agencies is on a good level including that which took place following the *infiltration* attempt," said the minister, who was referring to the killing of a Jordanian man by Israeli soldiers on Friday for illegally crossing into Israel from Jordan.

Mr. Mordechai said that he will visit Jordan in the near future to discuss "security and political issues." No date was given for his visit.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani said that security cooperation with Israel had been reduced because of the Israeli bid to kill Mr. Misha'al.

Asked whether Jordan had in any way severed security cooperation with Israel, Dr. Anani said: "I believe that the number of security staff [employees] at the Israeli embassy has decreased as a result of that thing, so this is the main indicator to the slackening security cooperation in the area," Reuters quoted Dr. Anani as telling Israel Radio.

Jordan, Syria to build dam on Yarmouk River

(Continued from page 1)

they will try to find ways for reducing the cost through the participation of their own firms in the construction process.

He said the two countries agreed in 1987 to build the dam but unfortunately due to developments in the region the project was not carried out. He said that a Jordanian delegation visited Damascus in September of 1996 and it discussed the project and found ready response on the part of the Syrian government noting that the talks over the past two days were a follow-up to those discussions.

Dr. Mahasneh said that the environmental situation in the Yarmouk River basin was reviewed during the meeting and that the two sides showed keenness to prevent pollution of the river water which is mainly used for agriculture in Syria and for irrigation and drinking purposes in Jordan.

Dr. Mahasneh pointed out that a project for the treatment of the Irbid waste water will be completed by the end of 1998 and that the Syrian side would prevent pollution from their side.

Future projects, on the river, either on Jordanian or Syrian territory, will be undertaken jointly by Syria and Jordan, he said.

Noting that under the previous studies Jordan was hoping to get 160 million cubic metres of *water annually from* the Yarmouk River, Dr. Mahasneh said that current estimates put the amount at only 85 million cubic metres.

The head of the Syrian side, Barakat Al Hadid, stressed that Syria is determined to carry out the agreement and build the dam pointing out that the two sides will soon move to the stage of implementing the agreement, noting that Syrian construction firms will take part in the building work.

Britain defends hunt for Lockerbie bombers

(Continued from page 1)

luggage holds.

Mr. Lord Hardie, the fourth lord advocate to deal with the case, said he was convinced the evidence justified the charges that had been brought against the two Libyans.

"[Counter] claims by Libya are based on nothing more than newspaper stories," he said.

But victims' families, some of them attending the trial, expressed frustration at what they termed a lack of progress.

"In nine years, we have seen neither truth nor justice. This is not a disaster to be used by politicians to strut about," said Jim Swire, spokesman for U.K. families — Flight 103, speaking on the eve of the hearings.

Legal experts said the International Court of Justice, set up in 1945 as a U.N. body, had a tricky course to steer.

"What is sensitive is that this is a battle about who has the final say — the Security Council or the court," said Menno Kamminga of Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

The International Court of Justice's decisions are binding and without appeal. Ultimately, however, the bench may have to rely on the U.N. Security Council to enforce them.

Bodies such as the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference have suggested various ways out of the impasse in recent months.

These have included proposals for the two suspects to be tried in a neutral third country, a suggestion backed by Libya, or at a specially established criminal tribunal in the Hague.

Iran stages 'show of strength' in Gulf

(Continued from page 1)

armed group of exiles opposed to Iran's Islamic revolutionary government.

Washington has said the build-up was aimed at preventing Iraqi aircraft from violating a U.S.-enforced "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq.

The spokesman at the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain had no comment on an Iranian charge that American ships were spying on the wargames.

Iran News, an English-language daily which often reflects the view of the Iranian foreign ministry, said the deployment of the Nimitz in the Gulf had heightened tension in the region and increased the risk of a collision.

"Iranian naval exercises are covering a wide area in the Arabian Gulf where the U.S. spy ships are crowding the waterway and increasing the risk of collisions," it said.

"It is but natural that any collision may spark developments with dire consequences putting the entire waterway at risk.

"If it happens, none but the U.S. will be responsible for the consequences. It is better all round if the U.S. stops this risky game in the Arabian Gulf."

The Iranian admiral said 120 warships, speedboats, missile carriers and logistics ships took part in Monday's stage which was named "a show of strength."

The ships were joined by about 40 air force fighter-bombers and army aviation corps helicopters in a flypast.

Other tactics included jumps by two teams of frogmen from helicopters, launching air-to-surface missiles, firing at hypothetical targets by gunboats and remote controlled aircraft.

The annual war games, code-named "Pirouzi" (Victory 8), were scheduled before the Nimitz move.

On the Arab side of the Gulf six navies — those of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates — were engaged in wargames named solidarity off the coast of Bahrain.

The six Gulf cooperation council countries, who rely on a large U.S. military presence in the region for their protection, have rejected an Iranian offer of joint exercises and said they would continue to depend on the U.S., Britain and France to guarantee their defence for the foreseeable future.

Evolution, recreation — the most ambitious 'theory of anything' yet produced

"Mental illness is ultimately a product of the brain, and the brain is obviously a biological organ. It has been taken for granted in all other areas of biology that to understand biological phenomena, evolutionary factors must be considered."

— Simon Baron-Cohen, a Darwinian psychiatrist, 1997

By Gwynne Dyer

EVEN TEN years ago we all still lived in thrall to the Big Ideas of three 19th-century European thinkers: Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Charles Darwin. Today two of the three are in semi-disgrace — but Darwin's idea is more powerful than ever. You might call it "the survival of the fittest."

It is remarkable how fast the three Big Ideas took over. Already in 1897, when writer Jack London, then 23 years old, was trapped in the ice on the Yukon River during the Klondike Gold Rush, he had Darwin's "Origin of Species" and Marx's "Das Kapital" (in translation) in his pack to help him through the winter.

He would undoubtedly have had Freud along too, except that the latter did not publish "The Interpretation of Dreams" until 1900. And for *the next two* or three *generations*, right down into the 1980s, most people in the industrialised world saw the natural world through the prism of Darwin's evolutionary theory, the human personality in terms of Freudian theory, and matters of economics, politics and history through the window supplied by Marx.

Not everyone accepted the Big Ideas, of course. The United States and some other Western countries inculcated a militantly anti-Marxist ideology in their citizens. Some religious people flatly rejected the idea of evolution. Many people suspected that Freud was just a dirty-minded old man with a genius for self-promotion. But the 19th-century Gang of Three was the reference points from which all discussions began.

How did an Englishman born in 1809, a German born in 1818, and an Austrian born in 1856 come to dominate the 20th century's ideas about the world? By *being in the right* place at the right time.

If the industrial revolution, or more broadly the "modern" revolution, had happened in 16th-century Asia rather than 19th-century Europe, then there would have been a Japanese Darwin, a Chinese Marx, maybe even an Indian Freud. In a newly "scientific," secular world, such ideas would be lying in wait for some advocate to pick them up, and somebody inevitably did. (Alfred Wallace came up with the same theory as Darwin quite independently.)

So the big ideas were born, they flourished — and recently, in two cases out of three, they died.

One very big country and a few smaller ones are still formally Marxist, and many of Marx's *insights* into the links between economics and politics will continue to mould the way we see the world. But as a belief system that commands widespread loyalty and respect, Marxism has been moribund for 20 years. The collapse of the Soviet empire was the result, not the cause, of its demise.

Freud's fall from grace has been less dramatic, and certainly his basic argument that there is more going on in our heads than what passes through our conscious minds remains valid. But his research methods, his behaviour towards his patients and even his basic honesty have been challenged by an ever-lengthening list of reputable critics.

Few people today take all the Freudian claptrap about "Oedipus complexes" and the meanings of dreams at face value. The need for individuals to talk about what is troubling them is now widely (perhaps too widely) recognised in Western cultures, but the specific reputation of Freudian psychiatrists has fallen so low that one critic, Canadian historian Edward Shorter, described "them recently as mere "gatekeepers for Prozac."

Which leaves Charles Darwin, naturalist, 115 years dead — whose Big Idea was the most elegant intellectual invention of the whole modern era. Indeed, its sheer elegance may explain why it is even more powerful now than it was in his own time.

It was always a simple notion. If you assume that offspring will vary even a little from each other, and that *those who survive long* enough to breed will favour one physical or behavioural characteristic even slightly over another, then both the form and behaviour of entire species become changeable over time. Evolutionary theory is the only tool that explains the complexity and diversity of the living world without resort to magic.

That is where Darwin left it, but the principle is so useful and so widely applicable that even a century later it is still making inroads into new fields. In the past few years, both psychiatry and physics have been invaded by Darwinian thinking.

Evolution and psychiatry? Of course. As Dr. Simon Baron-Cohen of Cambridge University argues in his recent book "The Maladapted Mind," most of what we call mental illness can also be viewed, in biological terms, as human responses to stress that, in a different time and place, had a valid and useful function in keeping the sufferer alive.

Panic attacks are Baron-Cohen's favourite example. Distressing though they are, panic attacks would be helpful to survival in an evolving proto-human species whose members were at grave risk whenever they found themselves in an open space with no refuge nearby. This evolutionary perspective does not diminish the upset that panic attacks cause, nor does it invalidate the drugs and behavioural training that can help to control them — but it does put them in a different context.

It is not "craziness"; it is the burglar alarm going off by accident, to the great inconvenience of both the householder and his neighbours. And Baron-Cohen and his allies extend the same argument even to such apparently pointless and self-damaging psychological states as depression.

"When primates battle for food or mates," said Dr. Robert Price, "they rarely seriously hurt each other because it's a ritual. When one submits, the other stops. Depression is a psychological package of thoughts and feelings that has evolved to stop us carrying on a hopeless battle."

Depression, in other words, is a programme with an evolutionary purpose, but in modern human beings it may go *off for completely inappropriate* reasons. Even when it really is triggered by a major loss of status, the situation it is designed to deal with, there may be no need to go through the whole miserable process if the sufferer can find other ways to overcome his predicament or reconcile himself to it.

The "evolutionary psychiatrists" are not denying the reality of depression, and their treatments run the gamut from counselling to chemicals, just like everybody else's. What is different is the context they set the problem in — but that can make a lot of difference for people who feel distraught and humiliated because their affliction is "only psychological."

Darwin, not Freud. And *some physicists now* think that the key to understanding the universe itself is Darwin, not Einstein — or at least, Einstein plus Darwin.

For the past half-dozen years, speculation has been growing among cosmologists that the very universe we inhabit may be the result of an evolutionary process. If so, then there should be many universes, most of them like our own in that they are suitable for the widespread evolution of life.

For physicists, the key question is: Why does our universe operate by natural laws that make life possible, and consist of materials that are the natural building blocks of life? Change the laws even a bit, and the kind of matter we are made of would not be stable. Change the proportion of carbon and other relatively heavy atoms in the mix, and our kind of matter would become very rare.

The man at the centre of this speculation is Lee Smolin, whose recent book "The Life of the Cosmos" has stirred interest far beyond the usual circle of pure physicists. What he suggests, in essence, is that whenever matter collapses into a black hole, a new universe emerges on the "far side" — and that each new universe has slightly different physical laws.

It is a theory of evolution on the largest imaginable scale. The basic idea that the universe came into existence in a "Big Bang" (perhaps exploding out of a black hole in a previous universe) has been commonplace in astrophysics for decades. So has the idea that the universe may end by *collapsing* into a black hole. But now, think big.

Imagine this not as a one-time event, but a process that repeats and repeats all over a larger "meta-universe." Imagine, too, that there is some tiny amount of variation in the physical properties of each new "baby universe." Then even if most universes originally were tiny and very short-lived, natural selection, the key Darwinian process, is bound to occur.

Selection for what? For universes that are bigger and longer-lasting, since those will produce the most black holes and effectively "outbreed" the others. Smolin postulates not a single universe, but an evolving population of universes whose generations are interconnected by unpassable "wormholes" passing through black holes.

The equivalent of genetic material on which this largest of evolutionary processes works is the physical laws that define each universe, and as natural selection proceeds, whole groups of closely related universes will evolve, sharing similar sets of physical laws. In due course, most existing universes will come to consist of the kinds of matter, and to operate by the physical laws, that maximise black-hole production. Which just happens to be the kind of universe we inhabit.

There is a side-effect of great importance to human beings: the kind of universe that produces the most black holes is also the kind that will be most prolific in producing life. Large amounts of organic (carbon-based) matter in the gas clouds between the stars seems to be crucial in allowing the gas clouds to cool and form new stars — and stars are the necessary precursors of black holes.

So a universe that is good at producing stars will also be rich in the organic compounds that are the basis of life. And those same organic compounds are likely to seed every suitable planet that forms around the new stars with life.

It is the most ambitious "theory of everything" anybody has yet produced, and not even Lee Smolin has figured out how we might set about proving it. But there could be no more convincing proof of the continuing power of the concept that Charles Darwin first glimpsed as a naturalist barely into his 20s in *the Galapagos Islands*, some 160 years ago.

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Mideast tension dampens Jordan's healthy growth forecasts for tourism in 1997

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan said Monday that political tensioo in the Middle East has soured a favourable outlook for its tourism industry in 1997 but a boom io hotel building was going ahead unabated to casb in on projected tourist influx by 2000.

Tourism Minister Akel Biltaji hlamed Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's policies for upsetting healthy growth forecasts for tourism in 1997 as rising tensions in the Middle East scared some visitors.

"If the situatioo in Israel was what it had beeo in 1994 and 1995, this year 1997 we would have reached double-digit growth," Mr. Biltaji told Reuters in an interview.

Now Jordan forecasts for 1997 a modest 2-5 per ceot rise from last year's 1.13 millioo tourist arrivals. Tourism receipts are not expected to exceed 550 millioo dioars ($776 millioo) compared with a 14 per cent jump in 1996 to 527 million dinars.

Receipts, about 37 per cent of Jordan's foreign currency earnings and 11 per ceot of its GDP, rose a modest 4.9 per ceot in the first seven months of 1997 to 310 million dinars.

Jordan managed to maintaio at least modest growth this year hy marketing itself as a sole destioation rather than part of e wider Middle East tour. Mr. Biltaji said Israel, hy comparison, had suffered e sharp drop.

"We were affected but we have grown because Jordan can sell in isolation as e diversified destioation... hut it could have been much better," Mr. Biltaji said, addiog that the average stay had risen to almost four nights from 3.4 nights last year.

Mr. Biltaji said combined tourism packages with Israel, promoted jointly to cash in on their 1994 peace treaty, dropped sharply. But Jordan was winning a bigger share of tourism to Palestinian self-rule areas which bypassed Israel, he added.

A decline in European visitors was offset by an influx of visitors from oil-rich Arab Gulf states as political ties warmed up, and by growing religious tourism from Indonesia and Malaysia on day tours of holy sites in Arab East Jerusalem via Jordan.

"Somehow the flow of GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) citizens has offset the decline from Europe and the Western hemisphere," he said.

A six per cent rise in Israel tourism, which accounted for nearly 11 per cent of total arrivals so far this year, was mostly accounted for by Israel Arabs, now staying longer in Jordan.

"The Arabs of Palestine stay three to four days on average and represent a large proportioo of Israeli tourism."

A troubled Middle East peace process was oot slowing an unprecedented $500 millioo investments in the hotel iodustry by businessmen pinniog hopes on a forecast surge in demand by the turn of the decade, Mr. Biltaji said.

"We have a good half billion dollars in investments... you have to have the availability to attract the market," Mr. Biltaji said.

Industry sources say at least four major five-star world-class hotels were currently under construction in Amman itself at a total cost of around 100 million dinars, aside from others in the prime resorts at the Dead Sea and Red Sea Port of Aqaba.

Tourism has been the main sector which benefited from Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel as local investors aloog with foreign partners sought to tap the country's potential.

Mr. Biltaji said new laws which permit full foreign ownership in tourism was encouraging wholly owned ventures by global groups.

Kuwaiti investors were considering investing over $200 million in projects and a British group had begun work oo a $100 millioo 20-storey hotel complex in Amman, business sources say.

Jordan, Sudan to cooperate in agricultural projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Agriculture Minister Mijhem Khreisha Monday emphasised the importance of launching Jordanian agricultural investment projects in Sudan and noted that such investments are a step in the right direction towards Arab economic integratioo.

Speaking during a meeting atteoded by Abdul Salam Abbadi, chairman of the Hashemite Charity Organisation (HCO) and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Mr. Khreisha indicated that the HCO has carried out several successful agricultural projects in Sudan.

"During the prime minister's visit to Sudan last month, we signed a protocol with the Sudanese officials to extend our expertise and cadres to exploit the vast irrigated agricultural areas in Sudan," the minister said.

"The Sudanese government has assigned a 160,000 dunum area in the Jazirah district which will be reclaimed and planted with different crops, particularly fodders and wbeat, in addition to raising livestocks to make up for Jordan's needs," Mr. Khreisha added.

The minister said the private sector will provide the sufficient funds for carrying out these projects under the supervision of the HCO.

The minister revealed that a technical Jordanian delegation, representing the ministry and the private sector, will bead for Sudan soon to thoroughly discuss with officials there the feasibility of these projects for both Jordan and Sudan.

High oil prices heal Saudi economy in '96

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An increase of nearly $12 billion in Saudi Arabia's oil income in 1996 put its economy back on track and cut the budget deficit and domestic debt, an official report sbowed.

The Kuwait-based Inter Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation (IAIGC) said the rise in oil prices also turned a current account gap into a surplus for the first time in 14 years.

The gross domestic product (GDP) of the world's largest oil basin surged by 8.6 per cent in 1996 compared with 4.3 per cent in 1995, 1.4 per cent in 1994 and a negative rate in 1993, the IAIGC said in its annual report.

A surge of around $3 a barrel in oil prices brought the kingdom an extra 45 billion riyals ($12 billion) in 1996 while its non-oil exports also grew by 4.9 per cent to 21.5 billion riyals ($5.7 billion), the Arab League's affiliate said.

"The increase in Saudi Arabia's income reduced the budget deficit to 3.3 per cent of GDP in 1996 and enabled it to repay nearly $5.87 billion in arrears to local farmers and contractors," said the report.

"The current account deficit was also eliminated and a surplus of around 700 million riyals ($186.6 million) was recorded for the first time since 1982," it said.

"This compares with a record account deficit of nearly 103.5 billion riyals ($27.6 billion) in 1991," the report added.

"The Saudi government is now giving priority to wiping out the budget deficit, narrowing the gap in the balance of payments, cootrolling public expenditure and debts, attracting investment, and expanding the private sector's role in the economy," it said.

The report classified Saudi Arabia as the seventh largest recipient of foreign capital in developing countries, with joint Saudi-foreign investments standing at around 134 billion riyals ($35.7 billion).

Foreign partners hold nearly 43 per cent of those investments.

It said the industrial sector had the lion's share of the funds, receiving around 120 billion riyals ($32 billion) in 717 projects.

The United States topped the list of foreign investors, with a total of 58.6 billion riyals ($15.6 billion). It was followed by Japan, with 17.2 billion riyals ($4.58 billion).

Saudi Arabia controls more than a quarter of the global proven oil wealth of around one trillion barrels and produces nearly 11 per cent of the world's total crude supplies.

Nearly 6.5 millioo barrels per day of its OPEC-decreed output of eight million barrels per day are exported.

Oman tightens spending to eliminate deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman is sticking to a belt-tightening spending policy it announced three years ago to eliminate a budget deficit and lure investment, officials and bankers have said.

In cootrast with oeighbouring Saudi Arabia, Oman has succeeded in keeping expenditure under control despite its relatively low shortfall and a surge in oil prices over the past two years.

"The government is sticking to its goal of rationalising expenditure to wipe out the deficit and lure more private investments," said Mahmoud Jarwani, executive president of the Muscat Securities Market.

"In some years, the actual expenditure was lower than projected although revenues were higher. Such measures are part of our reforms aimed at balancing the budget and boosting investors' confidence in the economy," he told AFP.

In its 1996 report, the Omani central bank said actual spending was cut by around 3.2 per cent to 2.25 billioo riyals ($5.85 billion) in 1996 over the previous year although revenues grew by 7.5 per cent to nearly 1.99 billion riyals ($5.17 billion).

This slashed the actual deficit to around 263.5 million riyals ($685.1 million) from 479.4 million riyals ($1.24 billion).

Bankers said the spending cuts have not affected growth as it was offset by a surge in private investment as n result of fresh government incentives.

A sharp expansion in non-oil sectors, mainly manufacturing and farming, coupled with a large increase in crude prices boosted Oman's gross domestic product (GDP) by 10.7 per cent in 1996 compared with 6.5 per cent in 1995.

"There is a growth in most oon-oil sectors due to reforms," an Omani banker said.

"The decline in government spending has largely been offset by an upturn in private business, which was eocouraged by the strong financial position of the country and more incentives for projects," he added.

Oman, a small oon-OPEC oil producer, has pledged to wipe out the budget deficit in 2000 within reforms aimed at expanding the private sector, diversifying its oil-reliant ecooomy and ensuring sustainable growth.

Although the deficit has persisted over the past two years, it remained under five per cent of the GDP and it was shored up mostly from the state reserve fund, which is financed through crude export earnings.

This has prevented a swelling in the country's debt of less than $3 billion.

According to the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund, Oman recorded a surplus of around 21.6 million riyals ($56.1 million) in the first quarter of 1997 because of tight spending and high oil prices.

Oman has projected a deficit of 263 million riyals ($683.8 million) for the whole of 1997, accounting for less than four per ceot of the GDP, according to bankers.

"If spending was maintained, then the shortfall could be much lower as oil prices will likely surpass projections," one banker said.

Unlike Oman, Saudi Arabia oversbot its forecast spending by nearly $12 billion in 1996 mainly because of payment of outstanding debts to local contracters and farmers.

This kept its budget deficit at around $4.5 billion.

OKTOBERFEST COMES TO AMMAN

HOTEL INTER-CONTINENTAL Jordan, in cooperation with Lufthansa the German Airlines, BMW and Safeway, will bring the celebration of Oktoberfest directly to Amman once more. The original Oktoberfest is the famous beer festival held in Munich, Germany each year from Sept. 21st to Oct. 15th celebrating the production of the first Beer of the year.

Hotel Inter-Continental will be holding on 15th & 16th October a German Oktoberfest celebration. Hans Loehner Band will be flown directly from Germany to provide the authentic German atmosphere of the celebration. As part of the celebration, there will be traditional German games and entertainment. Along with the festivities, guests can enjoy German food and the popular German beer.

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FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Listen carefully to suggestions made today by friends. Make note of your ambitions, and also of routines which need improvement. Later this evening will be good for you to seek out the advice of knowledgeable people.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If someone nearby has good financial experience today, ask for and follow this person's advice. Find more modern means of advancing in business, so that you can gain the respect and admiration of a bigwig.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Enjoy a gathering of close friends tonight, and make plans for get-togethers in the days ahead. These can be very interesting and profitable to you and fellow associates, so make every effort to complete some new project.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be with the one you love all day today, and you will both find much happiness. Avoid associating with strangers you know nothing about or you discover that you re in a difficult situation which won't be pleasant.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a fine day today for being gregarious and enjoying the company of your best friends. The best method to gain your wishes is to state them clearly in such a manner that knowledgeable people can be of assistance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get out socially today, perhaps to a civic function, and meet with persons who may be able to assist you materially in the days ahead. Later this evening will be a good time to go out on the town with close friends.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If yon've been thinking about a short trip with a close friend, this is a good day today to plan it. A new situation will raise later this evening which will benefit you greatly, so keep an eye on the situation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is an ideal day today to get your responsibilities organised so you can handle them more easily. Invite some good friends in for dinner and make it an evening which they will not forget abont in the days ahead.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be alert to new opportunities in the business world which will bring you success in the days ahead. This is also a good time to make new arrangements or to revise any old ones which have been in consideration.

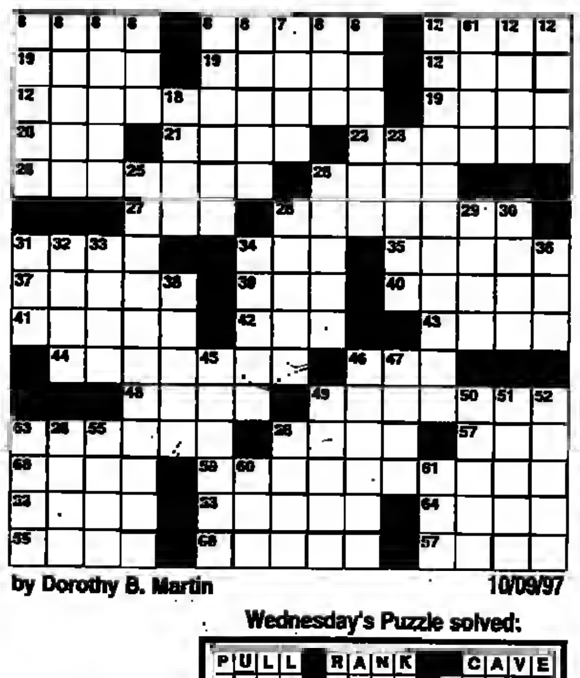
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A quiet discussion with a fellow associate can reveal much information which you were not aware of. Although it's good day to relax, don't neglect your duties so that you can gain the recognition of a bigwig.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are highly creative today, and you can use this ability to make your ideas work more successfully. Enjoy the company of your mate later this evening and thereby you can have a romantic time together.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a fine day today to improve your relationship with your family. This would also be a good time to entertain guests or to have a picnic, so make plans to get together and have a wonderful time.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

THE Daily Crossword

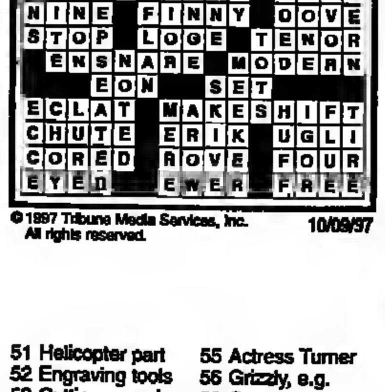


by Dorothy B. Martin 10/09/97

ACROSS
1 Norway's capital
5 Sacred song
10 Currier and —
14 Navigate
15 — and Hengist (Jute invaders)
16 Move around
17 Unlawfulness
19 Note
20 Ms. Gabor
21 — Mountains
22 Be half asleep
24 Paint again
26 Den
27 Literary monogram
28 Kin of wolves
31 Singer Tennille
34 Painting, e.g.
35 Cabs
37 The end
39 Receive
40 Blackboard
41 Newsman Brinkley
42 Antique car
43 "— a man with..."
44 Changed the title
46 Go-between: abbr.
48 Healing herb
49 Thespians
53 Dance form
56 Tab
57 Destiny
58 Jai —
59 Economic disparity
62 Bluster
63 Deceit
64 Joss
65 Donkey sound
66 Hindu garb
67 Persian fairy

DOWN
1 Willow
2 Ointment
3 Purple flower
4 Bullring cheer
5 Lighthouse
6 Kind of energy
7 Seed cover
8 WWII craft
9 Distress signal
10 Enduring fame
11 Panorama
12 Shade trees
13 Wild plum
18 Dupe
23 Tumults
25 Creativity
26 Game of chance
28 Tenet
29 Test
30 Locale
31 Bushy clump
32 Actor Sharif
33 Snow field
34 Assent
36 Transpose into type
38 Allan- —
45 Themes
46 Refer (to)
47 Festive
49 Annoy
50 Omit a syllable
51 Helicopter part
52 Engraving tools
53 Cutting remark
54 Winglike
55 Actress Turner
56 Grizzly, e.g.
60 Gun gp.
61 Rim

Wednesday's Puzzle solved:



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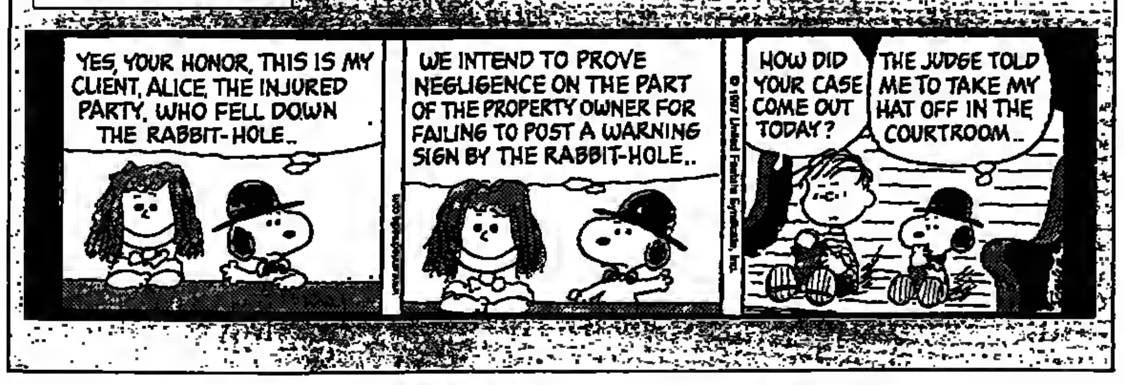
Peanuts



Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

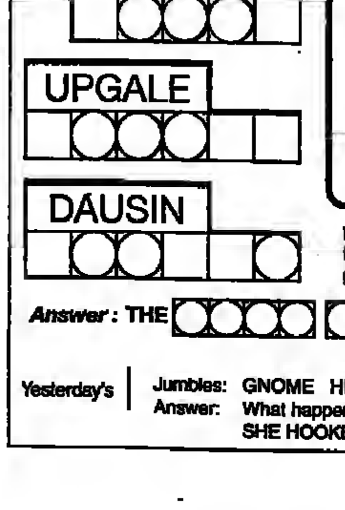
THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

"You know the rules—you're allowed to nibble on my neck and ears, but not on an empty stomach!"

JUMBLE® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



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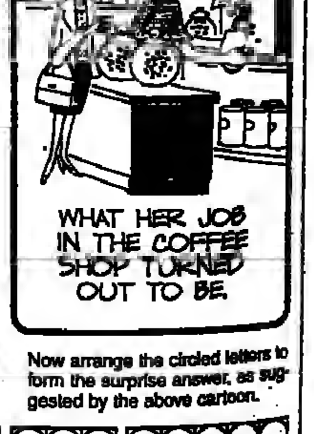

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GNOME HIKER CHORUS ORCHID
Answer: What happened on the fishing trip? — SHE HOOKED HIM

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

CBJ receives funds for 'returnees'

** THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has received the second disbursement of compensation of Jordanian "returnees" who sustained losses during the Gulf war. Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz said the amount will be transferred to a local bank, which for its part, will distribute the compensatioo to the beoeficiaries.

A total of 23,829 applicants will be receiving compensatioo of $2,500 each (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Horani outlines reorganisation, restructuring in energy sector

** THE COUNCIL of Ministers has recently adopted several important decisions to reorganise and restructure the energy and electricity sectors, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Mohammad Saleh Horani told the Jordan News Agency, Petra. He revealed that restructuring the Natiooal Electricity Company would result in forming three or more indepeodeot companies.

One of these companies would own and manage power geoeratioo stations and another would manage the transmission network and control centres. The third company, the minister indicated, would own and manage the distribution. Mr. Horani said power geoeratioo companies would be allowed to export electric power within certain principles and standards to be agreed upon between the governmeot and the companies concerned.

The reorganisatioo would eotail setting up a company, indepeodeot from the National Electricity Company, to deal with electricity distribution. This oew *firm will be wholly owned by the government* until it is privatised. Upoo its privatisatioo and registration as such, all the assets of the National Electricity Company will be transferred to it.

The transmissioo activity, electric control and purchasing electric power will remain the responsibility of the National Electricity Company which will remain owned by the governmeot, the minister said ooting that basic regulation of the company should be changed to be in line with this procedure.

As to the Natiooal Petroleum Company, Mr. Horani said the drilling activity should be separated from the exploration, productioo and marketing activity. Accordingly, a separate company should be established for drilling operations (Al Ra'i).

Developing world takes bigger share of global metal consumption

LONDON (AFP) — The rapid industrialisation of the developing world has dramatically pushed up consumptioo of base metals in ooo-Western couotries, British brokerage Rudolf Wolff said in an annual report.

"The developiog world has over the past couple of decades undergone a dramatic transformatioo, becoming iocreasingly industrialised," said Rudolf Wolff analyst Martin Squires in the latest "Special Report" oo the outlook for metals io 1998.

"Since 1986, metal consumptioo in these regioos has grown by 32 per cent, compared to world growth (excluding the ex-Soviet Union) of 28 per cent," he added.

The report said that although the developing world accouoted for less than 25 per cent of global consumption of hase metals, such as copper, which is widely used io industry and constructioo, it would become an increasingly key market, especially sioce it is home to 75 per ceot of the world's population.

China, whose ecooomy is growing at oearly 10 per cent a year, had a 127 per cent increase in metal coosumption from 1986 to 1996. "As the developing world economies shift away from their traditional agricultural hase and become increasingly iodustrial, domestic demand for metal based goods are expected to surge," Mr. Squires said.

In a deliberately fanciful example, the report said that given that ooe car consumes 112 kg of aluminium, if car demand in China was to match U.S. per capita consumption, 943 million more tonnes of aluminium would be consumed.

Cost of natural disasters seen ever increasing

GENEVA (AFP) — Natural disasters are iocreasingly expensive and decreasingly provided for hy iosurance companies, according to surveys made public by a U.N. agency.

Last year's floods in China, for example, were the most serious for 150 years, resulting as they did in 2,700 deaths and damage to some five million buildiogs. They caused devastatioo costing $24 billioo. Of this only arouod $445 millioo was covered by iosuraoce, accordiog to figures quoted by the U.N. ageocy, the Internatiooal Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Drawn up by the world's largest reinsurance company, Germany's Munich Re, the figures are among those used by the agency.

According to another Munich Re documeot, the gap is widening between insurance levels and the real cost of havoc wreaked by oatural disasters, particuarly flooding and drought.

The document cootaios a graph in which the curve of iocreased loss soars off the chart by 2000.

Munich Re figures show that the 50 greatest catastrophes in 1996 caused damage calculated at $50.5 billioo of which onlay $7.3 billioo, or arouod 15 per ceot, was covered by iosurance.

The U.N. agency which distributed the figures is coordioating in 138 couotries a study of ways to limit the coosequences of natural disasters and if possihle to prevent them.

"In many cases we can indeed prevent a disaster from happening," ageocy official Philippe Boulle told the press.

He cited the example of a warniog system io Mexico, where indications of seismic activity recorded oo the Pacific coast would allow 50 secoods to cut off gas and water distribution hefore the quake affected the capital.

A key elemeot, he suggested, is putting an eod to complacency.

"We are liviog in a society here where people believe they are protected from the risk element ... and so this false element of security is also quite a cause of the iocrease in damages from disasters oow," he said.

Bankers consider amending clearing system

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan's (CBJ's) clearing couocil, which consists of representatives of banks operating in the Kingdom, is considering taking out all the cheques that do oot cooform to technical standards from the electronic clearance system at the CBJ.

The council members are also considering shifting the collectioo of the value of such cheques through bilateral operations betweeo the coocerned hanks without the mediation of the CBJ's clearing department.

The employees working at the electronic clearing department are facing problems in processing the almost worn-out and crumhled cheques.

Collecting cheques among the banks themselves will require official correspondence and will take betweeo 10 and 15 days to complete a transaction.

The couocil members also discussed the possibility of holding an evening sessioo to facilitate the clearing procedures in view of the rise in the oumber of cheques.

Merrill Lynch says client assets top one trillion dollars

NEW YORK (AFP) — The U.S. financial services company Merrill Lynch has reported that assets held by private clients surpassed one trillion dollars in the third quarter to reach $1.018 trillion.

The firm said it was the first finance company to be entrusted with more than a trillion dollars by private clients it advises. In the past two years, according to Merrill Lynch, new client assets have grown at an average rate of more than $250 million a day.

The company added in a statement that to commemorate the milestone, the Merrill Lynch Foundatioo will donate an additional $5 million to charities benefiting children and families around the world. The donatioo will coosist of two parts: 10 grants of $250,000 will go to the American Cancer Society, the Asian Educational Resource Centre of the Asia Society, Foundation for the Treatment of Children with AIDS, Junior Achievement, the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the National Organisation on Disability, National Urban League, Save the Children, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and UNICEF.

The remaining $2.5 million will be allocated to company offices worldwide for donation to local, communities.

REUTERS — The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 13/10/97 18:18

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7501	0.6160	1.4615	120.75	1.3798	1719.40	1.9719	5.8738
DE Mark	0.5714	-	0.3518	0.8349	68.98	0.7879	981.85	1.1264	3.3558
GB Sterling	1.6235	2.8406	-	2.3718	195.87	2.2401	2790.55	3.1998	9.5308
CH Franc	0.6842	1.1975	0.4214	-	82.60	0.9438	1175.93	1.3486	4.0183
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4483	0.5096	1.2093	-	1.1419	14.22	163.20	4.8640
CA Dollar	0.7247	1.2680	0.4471	1.0615	1.14	-	1247.46	1.4257	4.2527
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0177	0.3580	0.0850	1425.52	0.8022	-	11.47	3.4170
NL Guilder	0.5071	88.73	0.3122	74.10	61.19	0.6993	871.19	-	2.9794
FR Franc	0.1702	0.2978	0.1048	24.8631	20.52	0.2347	33.55	33.5500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6398	0.3037	3.6729	1536.00	3.3993
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	0.5325	5.1410	0.4289	5.1877	2169.49	4.8018
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0810	0.98	409.56	0.9064
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9480	-	9.65	0.8054	9.74	4074.27	9.0167
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0834	1.01	422.00	0.9339
Kuwait Dinar	3.2933	2.3316	12.3511	1.2416	11.99	-	12.18	5058.46	9.9339
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	0.1026	0.9910	0.0827	-	418.20	0.9255
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4609	2.4417	0.2454	2.3697	0.1977	2.3912	-	2.2131
Egyptian	0.2942	0.2083	1.1033	0.1109	1.0707	0.0893	1.0805	451.86	-

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	20.39	21.01
W. Texas	21.33	21.98
Bonny	20.39	21.01
Dubai	19.18	19.50
UL Gas	194.00	205.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4669	0.16424	0.38988	32.2175
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47675	0.1677	0.39811	32.898
KW Dinar	3.2933	5.76701	2.0284	4.81464	397.931
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.66468	1.63372	3.87898	320.513
CY Pound	1.9268	3.3732	1.1863	2.816	232.623

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1482	1.1539
DE Mark	0.4031	0.4051
CH Franc	0.4839	0.4863
FR Franc	0.1201	0.1207
JP Yen	0.5875	0.5904
NL Guilder	0.3579	0.3597
IT Lira	0.41	0.4121

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Ccy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.54	5.62	5.79	5.81	5.96
GBP	7.09	7.22	7.31	7.46	7.43
JPY	0.44	0.44	0.53	0.48	0.48
DEM	3.40	3.53	3.65	3.85	3.95
FRF	3.43	3.51	3.65	3.82	3.97
CHF	1.59	1.74	1.87	2.00	2.09
ITL	6.80	6.63	6.33	5.98	5.81

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Clo
NewYork	DOW JONES	8094.82	49.61	0.62	8114.71	8042.75	8045.21
Newyork	S&P 500	970.69	3.71	0.38	973.96	966.98	966.98
London	FT-SE 100	5298.8	71.5	1.37	5301	5252.3	5227.3
Tokyo	NIKKIE 225	17204.7	-172.22	-0.99	17318.4	17151.8	17376.9
Paris	CAC 40	3000.98	45.87	1.55	3007.15	2972.15	2955.11
Frankfurt	DAX	4231.4	42.88	1.02	4234.46	4211.07	4188.52

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 13/10/1997

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	346.000	241.500	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	2	120	39780	332.50	331.50	1.00-
N	2.340	1.680	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	9	2050	3912	1.91	1.91	-
	1.190	.890	MID.EAST INV.BK.	74.2	0.00	1	400	452	1.13	1.13	-
	2.600	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.2	6.13	9	3280	8368	2.57	2.58	.01+
	5.200	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.90	12	56500	281370	4.98	4.98	-
	4.180	2.440	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	11.1	0.00	2	141	439	3.16	3.12	.04-
	4.050	3.520	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	15.0	3.26	11	1189	4373	3.68	3.68	-
	1.530	1.110	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	2	400	488	1.23	1.22	.01-
†	3.800	3.080	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	24.9	0.00	8	1300	5016	3.79	3.88	.09+
	2.030	.890	BKIT.AL-MAL (BETTER)	.6	16.85	4	1250	1112	.90	.89	.01-
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 238.45	%CHG: -0.20		63	66650	345466			
†	2.300	2.150	GENERAL ARAB INSUR.	13.8	7.22	1	9000	20790	2.20	2.31	.11+
	2.170	1.590	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	7.89	7	9000	17130	1.92	1.90	.02-
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.57	%CHG: -0.11		8	18000	37920			
	2.050	1.550	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.18	40	20414	38892	1.89	1.93	.04+
	4.030	1.320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	20.2	3.38	10	2600	8739	3.33	3.40	.07+
	1.650	.930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	1	1000	1300	1.30	1.30	-
	1.740	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	21.2	0.00	3	1150	1599	1.40	1.39	.01-
	3.720	2.890	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	9.2	0.00	6	4850	17169	3.53	3.54	.01+
	1.170	.920	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	2	1500	1380	.92	.92	-
	2.230	1.630	UNITED CO.	8.4	6.25	2	750	1320	1.77	1.76	.01-
	.950	.640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	8	8250	6585	.80	.79	.01-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.06	%CHG: +0.32		72	40514	76983			
	1.050	.930	ATTAHQEEB	9	0.00	1	500	500	1.00	1.00	-
	4.450	3.220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	22.4	3.30	41	20150	68659	3.45	3.33	.12-
	7.050	5.420	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.0	3.33	3	1100	6600	6.00	6.00	-
	11.100	9.070	JOR. PETROL.REFINERY	10.7	8.08	11	6025	66440	10.98	11.00	.02+
	1.410	1.050	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	9.4	9.26	1	100	108	1.09	1.08	.01-
	7.150	5.800	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	11.1	2.90	4	5300	36570	6.90	6.90	-
	4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.3	4.47	11	2740	12265	4.50	4.47	.03-
†	2.750	2.150	JORDAN DAIRY	9.4	8.73	1	100	280	2.75	2.80	.05+
	6.000	4.300	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	14.2	4.31	1	150	870	5.80	5.80	-
	3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM.IND.	5.6	10.50	4	2182	5191	2.36	2.38	-
	.710	.460	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.0	0.00	25	18400	9568	.52	.52	-
	1.230	.820	ARAB PAPER CONV.TRD.	27.2	0.00	6	2600	2320	.89	.69	-
	.770	.510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	8	4000	2240	.56	.56	-
	1.200	.510	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	9	0.00	2	700	385	.56	.55	.01-
	.920	.530	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	9	0.00	3	1000	670	.68	.67	.01-
	2.970	1.420	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	12.9	6.99	9	1500	2145	1.42	1.43	.01+
	.890	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	6	7400	5095	.68	.69	.01+
	1.670	1.130	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	16.6	5.38	2	500	650	1.29	1.30	.01+
	1.880	1.080	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	P	.21	5	900	1113	1.22	1.24	.02+
	1.460	.890	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	12.2	10.99	3	650	592	.90	.91	.01+
	1.620	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.5	4.55	1	150	231	1.53	1.54	.01+
	1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.1	0.00	35	42700	37620	.86	.88	.02+
	1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	6	1300	1528	1.16	1.16	.02+
	1.200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	51.8	0.00	7	6600	7464	1.14	1.14	-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 117.23	%CHG: -0.59		196	116747	269100			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 172.07	%CHG: -0.31		339	251911	729469			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 13/10/1997

	.610	.380	JOR.TRADE FAC.	10.9	0.00	11	11600	4756	.41	.41	-
†	.790	.650	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	64	396800	116337	.79	.80	.02+
	.570	.360	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	9	0.00	3	2000	800	.40	.40	-
N	.950	.720	AL-SHARQ INV.CO.	P	0.00	2	2670	2296	.65	.66	.01+
N	1.110	.850	UNITED FOR FINAN.INV	54.7	0.00	1	5000	5250	1.10	1.05	.05-
	.440	.200	JOR.INDS.MATCH-TEMCO	9	0.00	2	1500	360	.24	.24	-
	.540	.380	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	46.1	0.00	5	3000	1200	.41	.40	.01-
	.750	.400	NATL.HULT.ENG.NAMICO	9	0.00	4	1530	632	.41	.41	-
	.810	.710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	1	750	570	.75	.76	.01+
	.650	.580	MIDEAST PHARM. 75%	E	0.00	14	42650	16389	.62	.64	.02+
	1.380	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	6	10150	11388	1.37	1.36	.01+
	.730	.560	RAZI PHARM. 85%	E	0.00	4	4200	2146	.67	.66	.01-
	.490	.290	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	20	27613	9376	.33	.35	.02+
	.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	7	5050	3812	.63	.63	-
N	1.000	.690	NAT.ALUMINIUM. 75%	96.0	0.00	20	97800	43032	.69	.69	-
N	1.020	.720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	43.4	0.00	1	250	225	.95	.90	.05-
	.840	.580	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.6	16.13	2	200	123	.61	.62	.01+
	GRAND TOTAL					167	615763	218690			

† : New 11 months high
N : Listed during the past 12 months
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
g : Negative P/E
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

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World Cup qualifiers

Chile victory keeps suspense alive

PARIS (AFP) — Chile's hefty 4-0 home victory over Peru in Santiago on Sunday ensured that the fourth and final qualifying berth for the World Cup finals in France next year from the South American Zone will depend on the results of the final Group matches on November 16.

With Argentina, Colombia and Paraguay already safely through — either Peru, Chile or Ecuador will be the other qualifier while Uruguay and Bolivia lost out in the race and joined Venezuela as the also-rans.

In Sunday's matches, Chile delighted a 75,000 crowd with an impressive display against a disappointing Peru who finished with ten men after Juan Jose Jayo was given his marching orders on the hour.

The home hero was Salas, who scored a hat-trick, while Reyes was also on taget.

In the other zonal clashes, Ecuador kept alive their hopes by scoring a 1-0 victory over Bolivia in Guayaquil, while Argentina were held 0-0 by Uruguay and Paraguay beat Venezuela 1-0.

With one match left to play, Ecuador have 21 points — just one point less than Chile and Peru.

In the now-crucial final fixtures on November 16 Argentina play Colombia, Chile take on Bolivia and Paraguay face Bolivia.

Mexican soccer fans celebrate their country's qualification for the 1998 World Cup in France after Mexico tied Canada, 2-2, in a qualifying matching in Edmonton, Canada. Mexicans traditionally celebrate victories by the national team at a monnment near downtown Mexico City (Reuters photo)

British minister blames Italian fans for trouble

LONDON (AFP) — British sports minister Tony Banks bas accused the Italian fans for starting the trouble which led to police baton-charging Englisb fans in the Rome Olympic Stadium during a crucial World Cup qualifying matcb.

"There is no douht that the initial confrontation was started by the Italian fans," he told BBC radio on Monday.

"They were the only ones who could throw anything because everything had been confiscated from the Englisb fans," he added.

He also thought the Italian police over-reacted and said he had asked the British embassy in Rome to investigate the incidents.

"There was also considerable violence shown hy the Italian police hut I have to say that there were English fans who responded," he said. "The Government has asked for inquiries to he held hy the Foothall Association and from Embassy officials in Rome.

"This cannot keep going on. Lessons must be learnt and they must be in place by the finals next year when the wbole world will be looking at English soccer fans ... quite clearly, if we are not using the powers that we have to stop these people travelling then frankly we are not doing our joh properly."

Prime Minister Tony Blair said in the Sun newspaper: "I will never excuse violence by England fans, but there was a hreakdown which meant rival fans mixed where they should have been kept apart.

"But nobody can fault the efforts of the British Government, the Britisb police, the FA and the organisers of official travel groups in trying to ensure the match was trouble-free. The Italians, like us, will want to learn the lessons. We have a powerful case and I am backing it all the way."

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES: **Indonesia's Husaini Noor dives during the men's 3-metre springboard competition in tbe 19th Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta on Monday. Noor captured the gold medal in the competition (Renters photo)**

After finishing his second run of the day, American land speed record challenger Craig Breedlove poses next to his car Spirit of America in the Black Rock Desert near Gerlach, Nevada. Breedlove, former land speed record holder, is competing against the British land speed record holder Andy Green and his car Thrust SSC (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Chen breaks 400m record

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Chen Yan set a new world swimming record of 4min 34.79sec in the women's 400m individual medley at the Chinese National Games on Monday. The 16-year-old Chen touched bome in 4:34.79 to better the 15-year-old world record of 4:36.10 set by Petra Schneider, former East Germany, in Guayaquil, at the 1982 world championships.

Wimbledon sign Norway ace

LONDON (AFP) — Wimbledon ended a two-year chase by signing Norwegian international midfielder Stale Solbakken from Lillestrom for a bargain £250,000 ($400,000) on Monday. Wimbledon boss Joe Kinnear beat a host of other cluhs for the signature of the 37-times capped Solbakken, wbo has played a key role in taking Norway to next year's World Cup finals in France. A juhilant Kinnear said: "In a normal market be would have been 10 times that. He is two million pounds-plus worth of talent. "He is first cboice for his position for the Norwegian team and we are delighted he chose us."

Late goldrush, organiser error gives Japan victory in World Judo Championships

PARIS (AFP) — The World Judo Championships finished in thrilling but also cbaotic fashion here on Monday as Japan bagged two gold medals, a silver and a bronze to beat France, wbo thought for a blissful bour they bad come equal top of the standings for the first time ever.

The bosts were left flabbergasted and their fans in sublime ignorance after championship organisers revealed it bad all been a big mistake and that the Japanese had been sbortchanged by a bronze.

The mistake went hack to the opening day on Thursday, wben Romania's Ivan Radu was wrongly awarded a bronze in the men's -95kg category instead of Japan's Yoshio Nakamura, whicb finally sbifted the balance in the Japanese team's favour.

It was a belated if deserved triumph, however, on a day when brilliant baby-faced bantamweigbt Ryoko Tamura snatched a third straigbt title as the Japanese fought back superbly after France had dominated the opening three days with four gold medals.

Olympic champion Tadahiro Nomura also turned in an exhibition performance to land the title in the men's bantamweight category.

Yoshiharu Makishi, the 1996 Kano Cup winner, took the men's open category silver and Miho Ninomiya gained hronze in the women's open event to leave Japan in the clear with four golds, three silvers and three bronze.

The late turnaround was tough on the bosts, who bave consistently blazed a trail for the combat sport in Europe.

South Korea placed third with three gold and three bronze, ahead of Poland (two and one), with European champions Belgium well down in eigbth spot.

Tamura, nicknamed Yawara back home after a popular cartoon character, said sbe was delighted to have helped secure a famous victory which will go down in the annals of the sport.

"I am very happy, this gives me confidence for the future. I would now like to make it four titles in a row before going to the Sydney Oympics," she said afterwards.

"I was very concentrated and knew what I had to do although in the opening matches I was very nervous," she admitted.

"But I trained hard and I did my best." That was more than good enough for the Japanese.

Tamura was undoubtedly the star of the day as she shrugged off ber surprise Atlanta final defeat to North Korean Kye Sun Hui to score ber third successive 48kg triumph, although she had to figbt every inch of the way to see off Cuba's Amarilis Savon by the slenderest of margins.

The pocket dynamo, standing just 1.46 metres in ber bare feet, scored what proved to be a decisive koka by pinning slippery Savon briefly on the mat.

Other winners on the day which bad the 12,000 crowd at a packed Bercy stadium on the edge of their seats included Cuba's Daina Beltran, who won the women's open event when she needed less than two minutes to see off Spain's Raquel Barrientos to claim the Caribbean nation's sole gold.

There was glory, too, for Poland's Rafal Kubacki, wbo edged Makishi for men's open gold as he regained the title he won in Hamilton, Canada, four years ago on a yuko.

Tadahiro Nomura meanwhile made it a Japanese bantamweight double with his ippon win over George Revazishvili of Georgia.

Leading hy a two yukos and a koka, 22-year-old graduate student Nomura stylishly finisbed off his opponent by slamming bim down on the mat.

The Georgian had earlier been lucky to avoid repechages after a video replay showed that his North Korean pool semi-final opponent Kang Myong Chang had wrongly been denied an ippon win, the referee's decision sparking angry protests in the stadium.

Bronze medals went to Cedric Taymans of Belgium in the men's bantamweight division as he beat Kang on a second waza-ari and Flavio Miyata of Brazil, who heat Yacine Douma of France on ippon three minutes into the contest.

In the men's open category, bronzes were claimed by Belgium's Harry van Barneveld over Russia's Sergei Kossorotov and Dennis van der Geest of the Netherlands, who beat China's Pan Song.

In the women's bantamweight event, North Korea's Tong Suk Pae threw down Sylvie Meloux of France for a decisive wazaari in the final seconds for a bronze while the second hronze went to Monika Kurath of Switzerland.

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Indians push Orioles to brink of elimination

CLEVELAND (AFP) — Cleveland's Sandy Alomar singled home the game-winning run for two outs in the ninth inning here Sunday, moving the Indians one victory from of their second World Series in three years.

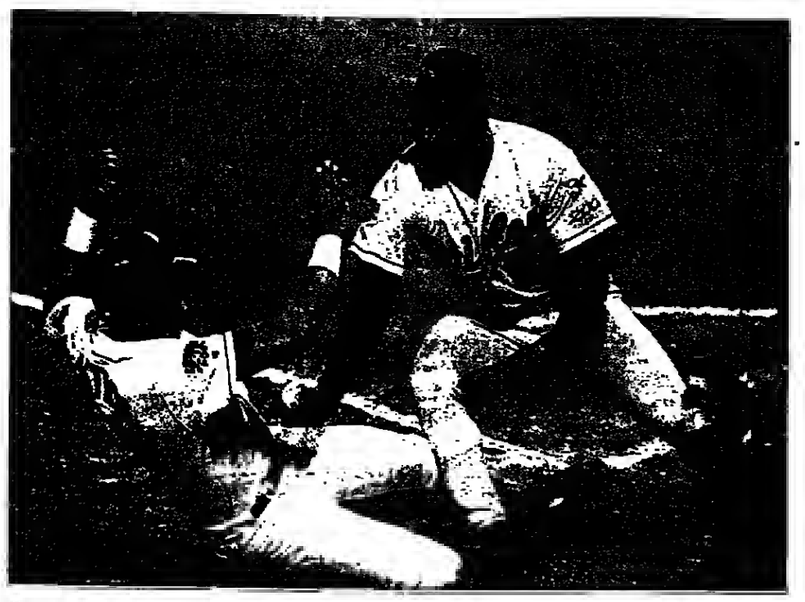
Alomar scored Manny Ramirez from second base to give Cleveland an 8-7 triumph over Baltimore, putting Cleveland ahead 3-1 in the best-of-seven American League championship series.

The Indians lost the 1995 World Series to Atlanta but will have another chance unless the Orioles can win three in a row from them.

Only eight times in 49 chances have clubs behind 3-1 rallied to win a series.

"We can't think about that. We have nothing nailed down," Alomar said. "We have to take every game like it could be our last."

Alomar, whose brother Roberto plays for Baltimore, was 0-for-11 in batting against the Orioles before erupting for a two-run home run in the second inning and run-scoring singles in the fifth and ninth innings.



Baltimore Orioles' pitcher Arthur Rhodes (R) tries to tag Cleveland Indians' David Justice (L) as Justice slides into home on a wild pitch in the fifth inning of game four of the American League Championship series at Jacobs Field in Cleveland. Justice was safe at home and teammate Sandy Alomar also came in from second base when the ball bounced away (Reuters photo)

"I have been having a tough series against the Orioles," Alomar said. "It was a hitter's night. I was just fortunate to take advantage."

The Indians had the worst record of any AL playoff qualifier and were underdogs in the first round before winning the final two games to oust the 1996 World Series champion New York Yankees.

Now Cleveland, whose three playoff berths the past three years matched their total in 90 prior seasons, can avenge last year's first-round playoff upset at the hands of Baltimore.

"The so-called experts made us the underdog. That's part of the game," Alomar said. "We have nothing to lose. We're going out to have fun and here we are."

Alomar's heroics came one week after his homer off Yankee reliever Mariano Rivera saved the Indians from the brink of elimination.

This time he made Baltimore's Armando Benitez a loser for the second time in three games, giving Cleveland a third consecutive one-run triumph.

Ramirez walked to open the Cleveland ninth inning and reached second on a sacrifice hunt by Jim Thome. Benitez was brought on to get the final out but walked Cleveland slugger Matt Williams and surrendered the winning hit to Alomar as he had a three-run homer to Marquis Grissom to lose game two.

Baltimore had rallied to level the game in the ninth when Cuban-born Rafael Palmeiro singled off the foot of winning pitcher Jose Mesa to score Roberto Alomar from third base.

Cleveland starter Jaret Wright, the 21-year-old hero against the Yankees, was tagged for three second-inning homers and sent to the showers after only three innings.

Bledsoe milestone as Patriots stay on top

FOXBORO (AFP) — Drew Bledsoe became the third New England quarterback to throw for 16,000 yards as the Patriots beat Buffalo *33-6* to hang on to first place in the National Football League AFC East Division.

The Patriots took their record to 5-1 and own a one-game lead over the Miami Dolphins, who beat the New York Jets 31-20 on Sunday.

The Bills fell into fourth place, two games off the pace.

Bledsoe, who was 14-for-28 for 181 yards and two touchdowns, has thrown for 16,127 yards in his five-year career, joining Steve Grogran and Babe Parilli as the only New England quarterbacks to eclipse the 16,000-yard mark.

Adam Vinatieri booted four field goals for the Pats, giving him a league-best 20 straight.

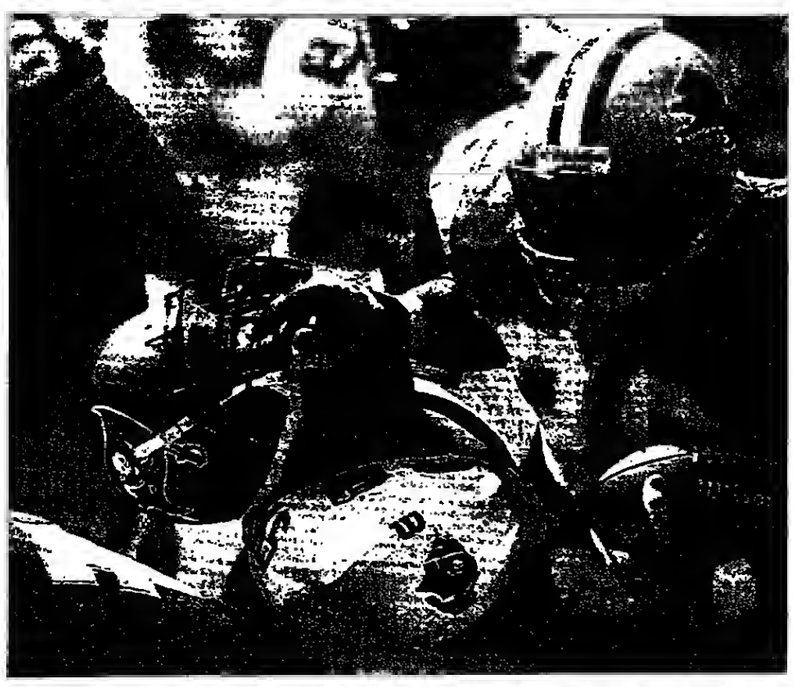
Bills quarterback Todd Collins suffered a shoulder injury when he was sacked by linebacker Ted Bruschi with 8:30 left in the first quarter and did not return. Billy Joe Hobart was 17-of-30 for 135 yards and two interceptions in relief of Collins.

The Dolphins stayed in touch as Dan Marino continued to torment the New York Jets with a season-high 372 passing yards and two touchdowns, snapping the Jets' three-game winning streak.

Marino has 7,513 passing yards and 66 touchdowns in 25 career games against the Jets, which stand as personal bests over any opponent.

Marino completed 27-of-38 passes and threw touchdowns of 36 yards to running back Karim Abdul-Jabbar and 22 yards to Lamar Thomas.

The Dolphins won for the first time in three road games this season, after losing at Green Bay and



Detroit Lions Barry Sanders (20) knocks off the helmet of Tampa Bay Buccaneers Derrick Brooks on a second quarter running play. Sanders rushed for 215 yards, as the Lions won 27-9 (Reuters photo)

Tampa Bay. The Jets lost for the 14th time in their last 15 home games.

Super Bowl champion Green Bay escaped with a 24-23 victory over Chicago to move into a tie for first place in the NFC Central with Tampa Bay, who were hammered 27-9 by Detroit.

Bears coach Dave Wannstedt's decision to go for the two-point conversion and the win with 1:54 to play backfired when Erik Kramer's swing pass to Raymont Harris fell incomplete.

In Tampa, Detroit's Barry Sanders had scoring runs of 80 and 82 yards against the NFC's top rushing defense and added a seven-yard touchdown reception as the Lions avenged an earlier loss to the Buccaneers.

Sanders, who carried the ball 24 times for a season-high 215 yards, recorded his career-best fifth straight game of more than 100 yards. He collected his first two rushing TDs of the season and passed Jim Brown for fourth place on the NFL's all-time rushing list (12,513 yards).

Sanders recorded his third career 200-yard game, including two against the Bucs.

Tampa Bay has lost two straight after beginning the season with five straight wins.

Danny Kanell made his first NFL start a successful one as the New York Giants scored 21 straight second-half points to defeat the Arizona Cardinals 27-13.

The Giants won their third straight to move over .500 under first-year coach Jim Fassel. They at least temporarily claimed the NFC East lead over Washington and Dallas, who meet on Monday night.

Philadelphia slipped further back in the NFC East as James Stewart, who replaced an injured Natrone Means, became the first player in 24 years to rush for five touchdowns in a game in the Jacksonville Jaguars's 38-21 win over the Eagles.

Dan Reeves, the NFL's active winningest coach, picked up his first win as coach of Atlanta and the 150th of his career as the Falcons beat New Orleans 23-17.

The Tennessee Oilers handed Cincinnati their fifth straight defeat, 30-7 in Memphis. Minnesota beat Carolina 21-14, Steve Young threw for three touchdowns in the San Francisco 49ers' 30-10 victory over the St. Louis Rams and Pittsburgh beat Indianapolis 24-22.

Sampras, Chang lead ATP Tour rankings

PARIS (AFP) — Leading ATP tour rankings published Monday:

1. Pete Sampras (USA)	4,291 pts
2. Michael Chang (USA)	3,385
3. Patrick Rafter (Aus)	2,889
4. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	2,581
5. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	2,564
6. Carlos Moya (Spa)	2,451
7. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	2,427
8. Sergi Bruguera (Spa)	2,357
9. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	2,318
10. Alex Corretja (Spa)	2,251
11. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)	2,240
12. Thomas Muster (Aut)	2,239
13. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	2,182
14. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	2,127
15. Petr Korda (Cze)	2,029
16. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	1,999
17. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	1,899
18. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	1,887
19. Tim Henman (Gbr)	1,873
20. Albert Costa (Spa)	1,819
21. Jim Courier (USA)	1,617
22. Boris Becker (Ger)	1,526

Major League playoffs

Cuban hero hurler puts Florida on World Series brink

MIAMI (AFP) — Cuban-born pitcher Livan Hernandez, a last-minute replacement starter, struck out a record-setting 15 Atlanta batters to put the Florida Marlins one victory from the World Series.

Bobby Bonilla knocked in one run and scored another in Florida's 2-1 triumph here Sunday as the Marlins took a 3-2 lead over the reigning National League champions in the best-of-seven NL championship series.

Kevin Brown, whose intestinal virus forced Hernandez into action, is expected to pitch in Tuesday's sixth game at Atlanta, where the Braves must win twice in order to reach their fifth World Series since 1991.

Hernandez broke the National League finals strikeout record of 14 set by John Candelaria of Pittsburgh in 1975 and matched by Mike Scott of Houston in 1986.

"I don't think there was a person in the stands who expected that," Marlins manager Jim Leyland said. "It was a fantastic, gutsy performance. He made great pitches."

The victory was the second in the series for the 22-year-old, who hurled five outs of scoreless relief to receive the victory in Friday's third game of the series.

Hernandez, a defector who left behind his family in 1995 to pitch in the major leagues, scattered three hits and walked two in the first complete game of his Major League career.

Florida Marlins pitcher Livan Hernandez (L) jumps into the arms of catcher Charles Johnson as teammate John Cangelosi (r) joins the celebration after the Marlins defeated the Atlanta Braves 2-1 in game five of the NLCS. Hernandez set an NLCS record with 15 strikeouts in the game (Reuters photo)

"My family is in Cuba. But when I go out to pitch, I have to think about pitching. That's my job," Hernandez said.

"Hopefully they were able to hear about it on radio. If they were not, hopefully someone was able to give them the information quickly."

On the front of his cap, Hernandez wore the number of teammate Alex Fernandez, a pitcher whose torn rotator cuff sidelined him and forced Hernandez to move from a relief pitcher to a starter.

Hernandez was planning to start in game six Tuesday but was told Saturday night he would pitch in game five because Brown, the staff's winningest pitcher, was too ill.

"They told me last night after the game I was going to start so I prepared myself mentally to start at that time," Hernandez said.

Hernandez, who did not allow an Atlanta hit after the first batter of the fourth inning, jumped into the air after his game-ending final strikeout, the right-hander's game-long grim resolve dissolving into a smile as he began punching into the air with joy.

Hernandez began his dominance early. He struck out Andruw Jones, Fred McGriff and Ryan Klesko — the most dangerous batters in Atlanta's lineup — and the Braves stranded a runner at first base in the first inning.

Bonilla scored the winning run in the seventh inning, with some help from Atlanta rightfielder Michael Tucker.

Tucker, whose home run in the second inning equalized for Atlanta, ran into the wall so hard that his contact lenses came out. He was removed from the game after a delay.

Ivanisevic rallies to defeat Rusedski

VIENNA (AFP) — Goran Ivanisevic rallied from two sets down to win a marathon struggle against Greg Rusedski in Sunday's final of the CA Trophy ATP Tour event here.

The third-seeded Croatian, playing in his first final since June, fought back to win 3-6, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-3 in a 3hr 2min thriller.

It was only the fifth time in his career that Ivanisevic had fought back from two sets down to win a five-set match — one in which both players blasted aces with regularity.

Fourth-seed Rusedski, who this week rose to fourth in the world rankings, fought to the end, but a succession of busy and successful weeks finally caught up with the Canadian-born Briton.

"My goal was to regain my momentum here — and finally I've won a tournament after a long period without success," Ivanisevic said.

Rusedksi paid tribute to Ivanisevic after the pair exchanged several glares during the match — during which Ivanisevic was given a code of conduct warning.

Rusedski obtained an early break in the first set and fittingly produced an ace — *his 10th* — to seal it 6-3.

Ivanisevic found his serving rhythm in the second, matching the Briton without ever really threatening his serve.

The giant Croat chalked up his 1,000th ace of the year as the set moved inevitably towards a tiebreak. Ivanisevic lost the first point with a double fault and never recovered as Rusedski held firm to take it 7-4 and go two sets to love up.

Ivanisevic clung doggedly to his serve in the third set despite some fine returning from Rusedski. The Croat saved 11 break points, then moved up a gear in the tiebreak, taking it 7-4.

Rusedski, looking for his second title in succession after victory last week in Basle, Switzerland, lost his serve, which had been impeccable throughout the week, twice in the fourth set as Ivanisevic won it 6-2.

The Briton broke back to lead 2-0 in the decisive set, but Ivanisevic immediately regained the break and then broke Rusedski again for a 5-3 lead.

Ivanisevic then served out for the match — but not before saving three break points.

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East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A Q 10 9
♡ K J 7 3
◇ 8 7
♣ K J 10

WEST
♠ 6 2
♡ 5 4 2
◇ K Q 10 2
♣ Q 8 7 6

EAST
♠ 7 5 4
♡ 9 6
◇ A 9 6 4 3
♣ A 5 2

SOUTH
♠ K J 8 3
♡ A Q 10 8
◇ J 5
♣ 9 4 3

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	1♡	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: King of ◇

Left alone, there is only one way for South to play four spades after the defenders take two diamond tricks. However, the defense can create a losing option for declarer. Can you see how?

After North raised hearts, South made a game try in spades. When North raised that suit as well, South proceeded to game in spades rather than hearts, since North's heart raise might have been made with only three-card support.

West led the king of diamonds and continued with the deuce in response to East's enthusiastic come-on. Assume East passively returned a 'safe' trump. Declarer would win and have no choice how to play the club suit for one loser — repeat finesses of the ten and jack, in the hope that West has the queen. As the cards lie, all would be well.

Unfortunately for South, East was a canny defender. There was certainly no trump trick for the defenders, and if West held the ace of hearts that was going to score a trick no matter what. However, South surely had the top heart to justify the game try. The setting trick would have to come from the club suit. How would you continue?

East persevered with a third diamond! That gave declarer a ruff-sluff that harmed, rather than helped. After drawing trumps, ending in hand, declarer led a low club and elected to play for split aces, going up with the king. The second club trick for the defense had appeared!

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Prosecutor charges 7 for plotting against Israel, arms smuggling

AMMAN (AP) — A military court will soon try four Jordanians on charges of plotting attacks against Israel and three others for alleged arms trafficking, a judicial official said Monday.

The trials will serve to demonstrate Jordan's commitment to a 1994 peace treaty with Israel at a time when Israel has been accused of betraying the friendship when it mounted a secret operation to assassinate an Islamist leader in Amman on Sept. 25.

The target, Hamas politburo chief Khaled Misha'al, survived and the Israeli attackers were caught, plunging Jordanian-Israeli relations to their lowest point ever.

The prosecutor general, Colonel Mahmoud Obeidat said two separate trials will be held later this month to try the seven Jordanians. He did not give a date.

He said four of them, who "plotted to undermine Jordan's security... and its peace treaty," were affiliated to a secret Islamist group, Bayaat Al Imam, Arabic for pledge of allegiance to the leader.

If convicted they face up to 15 years of hard labour in prison.

The two cases highlight the strong movement in Jordan among Islamist groups against making peace with Israel.

The Arabic daily, Al Adustour, said the four were plotting an attack against Israel across the southern Wadi Araba desert next January, but the plan was foiled by their arrest in July following a tip-off.

Police seized from them an unspecified number of band grenades, Russian-made Klashnikov rifles and ammunition, it said.

The daily identified the men as Saud Mohammad, 24, Issa Mohammad, 21, Mujahed Mohammad, 29, and Abdul Rahim Yousef, 25.

In the second case, only one, Ismat Shukri, was arrested two months ago, while the others — Ali Abdul Karim and Mohammad Mubarak — remain at large and will be tried in absentia, Col. Obeidat said.

Other judicial sources said the three were believed to be associated with Palestinian factions based in Syria and Lebanon. They face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

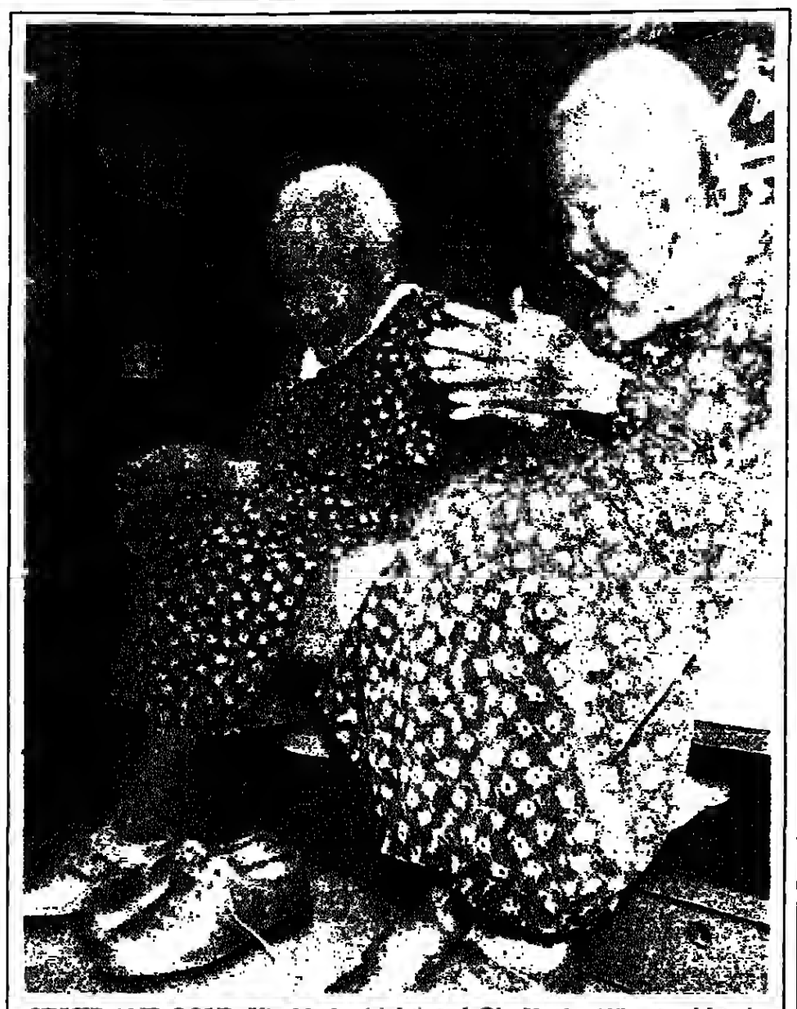
Col. Obeidat said the three have managed to smuggle to the Palestinian National Authority ruled West Bank an unspecified number of machine guns and ammunition.

He said the weapons were hauled in the summer of 1996 aboard two rubber boats across the Dead Sea, which Jordan shares with the West Bank and Israel.

Col. Obeidat said Shukri had confessed that the group had also stacked some arms and explosives in Jordan "to use them in attacks against tourists visiting the Kingdom."

He declined to say if the targeted tourists were Israelis.

In July, a military court sentenced an Arab army soldier to life imprisonment for gunning down on March 13 seven Israeli schoolgirls on a holiday in Jordan.



SILVER AND GOLD: Kin Narita (right) and Gin Kanie, 105-year-old twin sisters, try on gold and silver coloured walking shoes at a store in Nagoya, central Japan Monday. Kin means gold and Gin is silver in Japanese (Reuters photo)

U.S. rights group urges Israel to release Lebanese prisoners

CAIRO (AFP) — A U.S.-based human-rights group on Tuesday urged Israel to release 21 Lebanese prisoners whom it said have been imprisoned in Israeli prisons "for years and without charge or trial."

Human Rights Watch/Middle East, in a report received in Cairo, said the 21 Lebanese were among an estimated 120 "security prisoners and detainees from Arab countries and Iran in Israeli prisons."

"Another 150 persons are detained in Khiam," a detention centre run by Israeli soldiers and their proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia in an Israeli-held enclave in southern Lebanon.

"Human Rights Watch urges Israel to end its arbitrary detention of 21 Lebanese who have been imprisoned inside Israel for years without charge or trial," the group said.

It specifically mentioned two Shiite militants, Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid and Mustafa Dirani, who were abducted from their homes in Lebanon in daring raids by Israeli commando units in July 1989 and May 1994 respectively.

The report, entitled "Without Status or Protection: Lebanese Detainees in Israel," said that Sheikh Obeid and Mr. Dirani were held in utter secrecy and isolation, denied family visits and have been allowed to receive or send just one three-line letter each.

"These are Israel's forgotten prisoners," Human Rights Watch Executive Director Hani Mejalli said.

Israel has repeatedly linked the possible release of these detainees to a prisoners' exchange that would involve four Israeli soldiers who went missing in action in Lebanon in the 1980s.

"Human Rights Watch condemns Israel's failure to provide any status under international law to the detainees. The Lebanese in Israeli custody are held in conditions that violate minimum standards," the 41-page report said.

It charged that "at least 10 of the detainees were reportedly subjected to ill-treatment or torture during their interrogation in south Lebanon or Israel."

The report criticised Israel for "arguing that they are being held as hostages in connection with Israel's efforts to secure the release of its missing servicemen or their remains."

Human Rights Watch also expressed concern over the fate of the four Israelis missing in Lebanon and urged parties holding them to provide basic information such as whether the Israelis are alive.

It also urged the U.S. and the European Union (EU) to condemn Israel's detention policies and bring about an end to this practice.

The report also cited an Israel government response to Human Rights Watch request for information on the prisoners which said that all the detainees were "members of, or associated with, the Hizbollah."

Hizbollah is fighting Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Israel has occupied a self-declared security zone, 20 kilometres-wide, in south Lebanon since 1985.

Israeli court finds state-run reactor liable

TEL AVIV (AP) — In a landmark ruling, an Israeli court has held Israel's state-run nuclear reactor accountable for the leukaemia death of an employee and awarded his family more than $73,000, the family's lawyer said Sunday.

The ruling, handed down last week, came in the case of Haim Itach, who died at age 50 from leukaemia after working at the nuclear reactor at Dimona for 26 years.

Foreign reports have said Israel makes nuclear weapons at the reactor in Dimona, deep in the Negev desert, whose operations are shrouded in secrecy.

Israel is believed to possess nuclear weapons but will neither confirm nor deny it.

The attorney for Itach's family, Ilan Kaner, said Itach, a mechanical maintenance worker, was exposed to three radioactive leaks during his employment. The last exposure was two years before his cancer diagnosis.

Mr. Kaner said the verdict, which came after five years of proceedings, could influence dozens of pending cases against the reactor.

Medical experts testified that the likelihood that Itach contracted the disease from accumulated exposure to radiation on the job was significantly higher than chances it was from any other source.

Judge Hila Gerstel of the Tel Aviv district court found the nuclear reactor liable in the death, saying management did not take steps to ensure the safety of employees.

"This position of the defendant is not only a clear closing of the eyes but also shows contempt of human life," Mr. Kaner quoted the ruling as saying. The judge awarded the family $73,500 in damages.

Israel's Atomic Energy Commission has said the Dimona site is one of the world's safest. A spokesman for the commission, contacted by telephone on Sunday, did not have an immediate comment on the court decision.

Mr. Kaner said the case dragged on for so long because of the difficulty in obtaining information on work conditions at the reactor.

"They hid everything behind the heading of state security, even things that were not secret at all, like the salary of an employee at the reactor," Mr. Kaner said.

Much of the information came from cross-examination of witnesses for the defence, the lawyer said.

Another Israeli requests asylum from Palestinian National Authority

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Another Israeli has fled to the Palestinian National Authority ruled territories, asking for "asylum" from "social injustice" he faces inside Israel, the Palestinian daily Al Ayyam reported Monday.

The Israeli, identified by the paper only by his family name Weinburg, appeared Sunday night at the Palestinian Legislative Council building in the West Bank town of Ramallah asking for asylum, the paper said.

Weinburg, an Israeli Jew whose family came from an Arab country, said he was trying to flee "social and legal oppression which I have faced in Israel."

The asylum seeker, who was shown holding an American passport, said he was carrying letters for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak explaining his reasons for fleeing Israel.

In September, a group of 13 Sephardic Israeli Jews spent nearly a month in the West Bank town of Jericho after asking for political asylum there.

Most members of the group were from Morocco, Tunisia and Iran and said they were fleeing "racism" in Israel.

The group had in the past seized public settlement-units built for newly arrived settlers, complaining that they were homeless while the government provided new settlement-units for recent immigrants from Russia and Europe.

They were persuaded to return to Israel by Deputy Maxim Levy, a member of the Israeli ruling coalition party Gesher, which relies on support from Sephardic Jews. He promised to work to provide housing for them.

The Sephardim are Jews of Spanish origin, many of whose families emigrated to Middle Eastern and North African lands where they lived for generations before moving to Israel.

Intellectuals denounce commemoration of Napoleon's expedition into Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian intellectuals are up in arms as Egypt and France mark the bicentennial of their relations which started with Napoleon Bonaparte's military campaign here.

"Have you ever seen a country celebrate the day it was invaded," asked Ossama Issa, a leading member of the Nasserite Party which is opposed to the string of cultural events scheduled for the bicentennial.

"This is an anomaly of history. It is indecent," said Mr. Issa.

Mr. Issa, a law professor at Cairo's Ain Shams University, considers himself "a big friend of France" and "an Egyptian Gaullist.

"Can you imagine France celebrating the German invasion by Bismarck or Hitler?"

Di'a Rashwan, a political scientist at the Al Ahram Research Centre, agreed with Mr. Issa and wondered if the next step would be to commemorate the start in 1881 of the British occupation of Egypt.

"This celebration will undermine France's image in Egypt because it will rekindle the memory of an unfortunate event," said Mr. Rashwan, noting that French-Egyptian relations have been at their best since 1967 when De Gaulle sided with Cairo against Israel.

But for organisers of the year-long bicentennial which began Oct. 1, Napoleon's military expedition into Egypt and politics are not involved.

The programme is strictly cultural, with 100 events comprising concerts, plays, operas, films and exhibitions in Egypt and France under the theme: "France-Egypt: shared horizons."

"There has been no question of commemorating Napoleon's military expedition," said Kamal Al Zoheiri, director of the Egyptian committee in charge of organising the bicentennial.

The Egyptian culture ministry is likewise adamant: "We are celebrating scientific, cultural, artistic relations, an ancient and fascinating friendship," said Ministry Undersecretary Mohammad Ghoneim.

The French ambassador in Egypt, Jean-Marc de La Sabliere, recently spoke at a public gathering of the scientific and cultural ties which bind Paris and Cairo, but he made no reference to Napoleon, who started it all.

Blair, Adams engage in historic handshake

BELFAST (R) — Tony Blair shook hands with Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams on Monday in the first meeting for more than 70 years between a British prime minister and an Irish Republican leader.

The controversial meeting with the head of Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing, drew fierce criticism from northern Irish Protestant leaders and spilled over into angry jostling when Prime Minister Blair walked the streets of Belfast.

Mr. Blair also met leaders of seven other parties involved in peace talks on the future of northern Ireland. He emerged from the province's former parliament building at Stormont in east Belfast later to defend his decision to meet Mr. Adams.

"We can continue with the hatred and the despair and the killing, treating people as if they were not parts of humanity or we can try and settle our differences by negotiation, by discussion, by debate," Mr. Blair told reporters.

"So, that's what's important, whether it's with Gerry Adams or with the loyalist [pro-British Protestants] people I met or with anyone else," he said.

British officials said Mr. Blair had told Sinn Fein leaders that they and other parties to the peace talks had a once-in-a lifetime chance to shape history.

"If we don't seize the opportunity now, we may not see it again in my lifetime," an official quoted Mr. Blair as telling Mr. Adams.

Mr. Blair said he would use all his energy to achieve peace "it's a very rare thing for humanity to make sense of history but that's exactly what we've got to do," he was quoted as saying.

He told Mr. Adams: "You either end up as victims of your history or you make sense of it... I do believe this is one of the moments in history when things can be moved forward."

The officials said Mr. Blair had emerged from the meetings feeling very encouraged and sensing a real political will to make progress towards ending decades of strife between Catholics and Protestants over British rule.

But earlier, Mr. Blair had faced angry protests when he visited a strongly Protestant area of east Belfast. Police and security guards had to usher the prime minister into a bank after a hostile crowd surged forward, with some people shouting abuse.

One woman flung a rubber glove at Mr. Blair, hitting him in the chest. She explained to reporters that she had planned to wear the glove when she shook Mr. Blair's hand to show her disgust at his handshake with Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams himself played down the historic handshake.

"Well, I have shaken hands with many people," he told reporters.

The Sinn Fein leader also stressed his undiluted commitment to a united Ireland, an aim vehemently opposed by Northern Ireland's Protestant majority.

"We want to see Irish unity, we want him [Blair] to be the prime minister that helps bring that about and indeed, as I said to him, we want him to be the last British prime minister with jurisdiction in Ireland," Mr. Adams said.

The last British prime minister to shake hands with an Irish Republican leader was David Lloyd George when he met Eamon De Valera and Michael Collins for negotiations with Sinn Fein in 1921 that led to the partition of Ireland.

Ken Maginnis, security spokesman for the Ulster Unionist Party, the main pro-British Protestant group, said it was "demeaning for the prime minister of the United Kingdom to be meeting unreconstructed terrorists like Mr. Adams."

Unionists, angry that IRA guerrillas have not surrendered their weapons, are furious at what they see as a move bestowing respectability on Sinn Fein.

Mr. Blair reassured them that he would hold the IRA to the commitment it made to non-violence in exchange for Sinn Fein's entry to the peace talks.

"That is what they accepted and that is what we will hold them to," Mr. Blair said.

Algerian forces tighten noose on GIA

26 more civilians massacred — press

ALGIERS (AFP) — The Algerian army is closing in on Islamists hiding in Ouled Allel, near Algiers, while acknowledging failure to rescue an unknown number of hostages, press reports said Monday.

Monday's newspapers, both government and private, widely quoted military sources on the operation, which began two weeks ago against the Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

The press reports quoted a "superior officer" as giving a latest toll of 35 dead among the "terrorists," including two local emirs. Other bodies may lie buried in the wreckage of houses destroyed in the operation.

The officer was identified by a private newspaper as General Fodhil Cherif, who heads up the operation.

The government daily Al Mujahid said the army had lost four men, while six were wounded, by mines strewn in the area about 10 kilometres south of Algiers.

The army soldiers must run a gauntlet of traps and mines as they progress from house to house in their efforts to root out GIA fighters hiding in underground shelters.

Residents have fled the area, which has become a battleground, according to witnesses and photographs appearing in the national press.

However, the army has apparently failed to achieve one of the main goals of the operation, that of rescuing hostages being held by the GIA.

"The security forces tried in every way possible to save the lives of the hostages. Unfortunately, the terrorists preceded them, eliminating all those who might impede their riposte," Al Mujahid wrote.

Meanwhile, other press reports on Monday, blamed armed extremists for massacring 26 people in attacks at the weekend, including all but one member of two families who had remained in a small hamlet near the birthplace of GIA leader Antar Zouabri.

Fourteen people, mostly women, were attacked on Sunday at Haouche Souidani in the Mitidja farming plain south of Algiers, where they had their throats slit and their bodies burned. The only survivor was an adolescent boy who was absent when the killers arrived.

The GIA has recently stepped up attacks on isolated civilian settlements and is totally opposed to any dealings with the secular authorities, whereas the military wing of the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) has declared a unilateral ceasefire.

COLUMN

'Genuine but not obliging'

CAIRO (AP) — The U.S. treasury doesn't print $1 million bills, but that didn't stop four men from trying to sell one for the discount price of $650,000. Egyptian authorities working off a tip located and arrested a businessman and three lawyers who were selling the bill, the daily Al Akhbar reported in its Monday editions. It said the arrests were made in Cairo, but did not say when. The bill came with a certificate testifying to its authenticity. But the newspaper said it also carried a disclaimer in small print at the bottom, saying it "does not present any financial obligation to the U.S. government."

Heston sticks to his guns

HOLLYWOOD (AFP) — Veteran actor Charlton Heston has a new sideline — as a columnist for the monthly magazine "Guns and Ammo." Heston's inaugural column in November will be a rallying cry for gun owners to fight to defend their rights to own such weapons. Heston also happens to be vice president of the National Rifle Association.

Queen's visit proves a dog's life for some

NEW DELHI (AFP) — New Delhi's municipal authorities deployed teams of stray dog snatchers to clean up the heart of the capital on Monday morning at the start of Queen Elizabeth II's six-day state visit. Stray dogs were being chased across official gardens lining the route leading up to India's presidential palace and bundled into the back of vehicles before a ceremonial welcome for the British monarch. The capital also has thousands of cattle and monkeys, but their exalted status among those of the Hindu faith protects them from the fate suffered by stray dogs.

Chubby dog diets its way out of hole

LONDON (AFP) — Casper, an overweight 18-month-old terrier trapped underground when she chased a rabbit into a hole and couldn't get out, has freed herself after 20 days on a forced starvation diet. "She was living off her fat," Casper's owner Rachel Mann told The Times. "Before all this, Casper was so fat... That's why she got stuck, but it also saved her life. It was only when she had lost all the weight that she escaped." Extreme measures had been employed to find the dog, she said, including high-tech sensing devices used to find earthquake victims. But she found her own way out, and back home, simply by losing enough weight to fit back through the hole.

Women still find me attractive — Richards

NEW YORK (AP) — Keith Richards, in the middle of a 33-city Rolling Stones tour, isn't considering retirement — in part, he says, because women still find him attractive. "No one would be asking about retiring if we were old black guys," the 53-year-old Richards said in Sunday's Daily News. "Nobody said anything like that to Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington or Count Basie. Besides, the chicks still dig me. The lingerie collection this year is my biggest ever."